Over $7K bail set for man who allegedly beat a child. PAGE 2
King-Hinds: CPA working to have direct int'l flights on Tinian. PAGE 4

Hafa Adai!

75¢

Saipan Tribune

COVID-19 vaccine shipments now begin

Boxes containing the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine are prepared to be shipped at the Pfizer Global Supply Kalamazoo manufacturing plant in Portage, Mich., Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020. AP

By MARTHA IRVINE and MORRY GASH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORTAGE, Michigan (AP)—The first of many freezer-packed COVID-19 vaccine vials made their way to distribution sites across the United States on Sunday, as the nation's pandemic deaths approached the horrifying new milestone of 300,000.

» 'This is a historic day'

The rollout of the Pfizer vaccine, the first to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration, ushers in the biggest vaccination effort in U.S. history—one that health officials hope the Ameri-

See VACCINE on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Dec. 14, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,079	27	7,106
Recovered	6,413	0	6,413
Active	548	27	575
Deaths	117	1	118
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			93,456

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	113	0	113
Traced via Travel Screening	83	0	83
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			118

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

Volume XXX, Issue No. 248
TUESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2020
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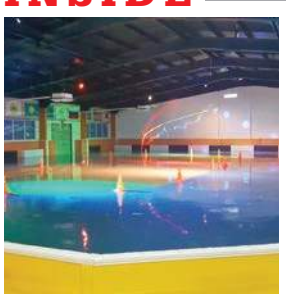
INSIDE



BUSINESS
International Roller Skates at the Winner's Compound in San Antonio is now open every day.
PAGE 11

WORLD
Italy eclipses Britain to become the nation with the worst coronavirus death toll in Europe.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
John le Carre, whose intricate narratives defined the Cold War espionage thriller, has died.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Over $7K bail set for man who allegedly beat a child

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court imposed Monday a cash bail of over $7,000 on a man who allegedly beat a female child for not cleaning when told to do so.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan imposed a $7,500 bail on Vincent "VJ" Sanchez, 25, for allegedly punching the child twice in the face and in the neck. Sanchez was ordered to return to court on Dec. 16 at 9am for a preliminary hearing and again on Jan. 5 for his arraignment.

Bogdan said the maximum sentence for child abuse is five years and a $2,000 penalty.

According to court documents, the Department of Public Safety received a call on Dec. 7 from the victim's mother about an assault and battery incident. At the scene, the caller told police that she saw Sanchez punch the child twice. She said she overheard Sanchez tell the child that if she doesn't clean, he'll punch her until she has bruises all over her body. The caller said she wanted to help the victim but she was afraid of him.

She said she and her husband put the victim and the other children into the car and told Sanchez that they were going to the beach but they, instead, pulled over at Winchell's where they called for police assistance. The police did not clarify how Sanchez is related to the child and the mother.

Police also interviewed the victim who said Sanchez told her to clean and while she was sweeping, and that Sanchez punched her on the left cheek and told her to do it "faster."

The victim said it wasn't the first time Sanchez beat her. She mentioned an instance where he was smoking marijuana in the living room and Sanchez burnt her and her mother with a hot lighter.

She also stated there was an instance when Sanchez beat her until her nose bled. She said her mother was too scared to stop him.

The victim said that Sanchez wasn't like that before, that he only started acting that way when he started smoking a "white thing." She described the substance as having the appearance of sugar inside a Ziplock bag.

MCDONALD'S DONATES TO CLUB 200 NEIL FAMA

Marcia Ayuyu, left, owner/operator of McDonald's Saipan, presents a pledge of $2,500 to American Red Cross-NMI Chapter Club 200, represented here by American Red Cross board chair Tayna Belyeu Camacho and other ARC officials. McDonald's Saipan/Guam has consistently donated to the American Red Cross since 2010, with this year being the first time in a long time that the ARC Walkathon was cancelled due to the pandemic. Ayuyu remains thankful to the American Red Cross for proceeding with the Club 200 event, which will be held virtually this year. For more information on how you can help donate, contact the Red Cross office at 234-3459.

Marianas underwater cleanup gains Korean media attention

A snapshot from the Marianas' efforts to rehabilitate popular tourist sites during the lull in tourism has gained national media attention in South Korea, the destination's top source market prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Monday, Dec. 7, MBC Newsdesk, the longest-running newscast in South Korea, broadcast a story about Koreans in the Marianas cleaning underwater memorials. The news story was shared with 3.3 million viewers, generating about $93,000 PR ad value.

The coverage was based on a press release distributed by the Marianas Visitors Authority's Korea office. The release, titled "Koreans in The Marianas Clean Underwater Memorial Monuments," generated 13 media articles across Korea in two days. The news was also shared on Facebook, Instagram, Naver, YouTube, and other channels, generating extensive positive comments:

"I really respect them and thank them for this work. So proud of you guys," wrote one social media commenter. Others wrote, "I would like to gather divers and join this volunteer work. What do you guys think?" and, "It's made me decide to go scuba-diving [on] Saipan. Thanks so much for this volunteer work."

"Every sector has been hit as hard by the pandemic, and travel industry workers are going through a more difficult time than ever," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "However, even in times such as these, the good deeds of community members who continue to carry out voluntary activities to make the Marianas a better place is attracting attention and warming the hearts of potential visitors."

The underwater memorials were cleaned by members of the Northern Marianas Korean Diving Operators: Aqua Dive, Dive Saipan, Dive Y2K, Deep Blue, H2M Saipan, Sean Dive, Pro Divers Saipan, and Deep Blue Sea. ***(MVA)***

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Du and Lin siblings win 2020 App Challenge

Justin Du, Jie Du, Carson Lin, and James Lin of Marianas High School are the winners of the 5th Annual Northern Mariana Islands Congressional App Challenge. The Marianas High School sophomores scored the top rank among a total of 14 submissions from schools in the Northern Marianas.

"This year's app submissions were some of the most creative and thoughtful concepts for apps that I have seen," said Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP). "All of our participants displayed perseverance in their use of code and turned their innovative ideas into functional apps."

The Congressional App Challenge is an annual coding competition hosted by Members of Congress nationwide. Students compete with other coders in their district and can work with teams of up to four people to create an app. Apps can be developed for any platform and students can choose which coding language they want to use. The purpose of the App Challenge is to encourage students to learn to code while inspiring them to pursue careers in computer science.

The CNMI's winning app this year is "SRC," a Web-based customer relationship management system that allows businesses to manage their interactions with current, past, and potential customers.

"Many businesses have to close because of the pandemic, and many things have to be moved online to prevent employees from getting COVID-19," the students said in their demonstration video. "The main purpose of our app is to help companies manage customers and payments all online."

As the Northern Marianas' winning team, the team of four will receive national recognition and have their work eligible for display at the U.S. Capitol. They will also receive invitations to the House of Code reception happening virtually next spring.

This year's second place winners are Jaehoon Son and Dip Roy from Marianas High School with their app "Kallo." Kallo is a Chrome browser extension that restricts and reports student's activities during a test or exam. Mount Carmel School students Mikee Mame Mendoza and Maria Ayuyu placed third with their app, "EcoFriend," an app that allows individuals to keep track of their ecological footprint and the steps they take to improve the environment. ***(PR)***

Justin Du, Jie Du, Carson Lin, and James Lin of Marianas High School are the winners of the fifth annual Northern Mariana Islands Congressional App Challenge. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Free Christmas concert on Sunday

The Saipan Pacific Winds Concert Band is teaming up with the Su-san Band for the annual Christmas Concert, which is free and is arranged especially for all to enjoy during this difficult time.

The special concert will be held on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020, starting at 4:30pm (doors will open at 4pm), at the Royal Taga Ballroom of the Saipan World Resort

Admission is free but donations are welcome. Due to limited seating, interested attendees are requested to get a physical ticket from a band member (contact Atsuko Eck at saipanpacificwinds@gmail.com) or register online at https://forms.gle/2qvDcDPi92zwt3mv9). If registration is done online, a physical ticket is not needed. ***(PR)***

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IT&E

King-Hinds: CPA working to have direct int'l flights on Tinian

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds assured the Tinian community yesterday that CPA is hard at work to make their dream of having direct international flights a reality.

King-Hinds

King-Hinds also disclosed that CPA recently put out a request for proposals to revitalize its Tinian Marina Dock, with a plan to use a portion of the $1.9 million that has been allocated for the improvement of the island's seaport.

That $1.9 million comes from the $21.9 million that CPA received from the U.S. Department of Defense for the 40-year lease agreement for certain airport and seaport properties on Tinian for the U.S. Air Force's divert airfield.

King-Hinds acknowledged that she's been getting a lot of inquiries about where that $21.9 million is now, that people have been asking how those funds will be spent, if they have already been touched, and why it has not been spent to make improvements on Tinian.

King-Hinds said she understands and appreciates the anxiety of the Tinian community, given that its people have sacrificed so much already in terms of public lands and development because of their relationship with DOD, and that everyone is looking to see the benefit of the bargain of that relationship.

She said the divert airfield lease proceeds are intended to make improvements so that Tinian develops the airport to realize the community's dream of welcoming direct international flights.

"Those plans have not changed and CPA will work tirelessly to make that dream a reality," King-Hinds said.

With respect to the Tinian Marina Dock improvement project, King-Hinds said that the request for proposals is to pave the parking lot for cars and boats and build a restroom and washdown facility, a mural and two pavilions.

She said the $20 million of the $21.9 million is reserved to build infrastructure at the Tinian airport that would allow the accommodation of international flights.

Specifically, King-Hinds said, CPA intends to build a fuel storage farm and infrastructure to accommodate both federal requirements by Customs and Border Protection and Transportation Security Administration for international travelers.

She said the cost improvements as suggested by the recent Tinian International Airport master plan will cost over $20 million.

Right now, King-Hinds said, they are trying to figure out how to minimize that cost by timing some of these improvements with the divert airfield construction to see if they can work out an agreement whereby CPA could reduce some of these costs.

In May 2019, CPA received the lump-sum payment of $21.9 million after CPA, the CNMI government, and DOD signed the 40-year lease agreement. The deal will allow the Air Force to use Tinian as an alternative landing site for its planes—a divert airfield—in case Anderson Air Force Base in Guam is inaccessible due to war or calamities.

The lease agreement has reportedly spurred economic activities on the island.

VACCINE

From Page 1

can public will embrace, even as some have voiced initial skepticism or worry. The first of two shots are expected to be given in the coming week to health care workers and nursing home residents.

Quick transport is key for the vaccine, especially since this one must be stored at extremely low temperatures—about 94 degrees below zero. Early Sunday, workers at Pfizer—dressed in fluorescent yellow clothing, hard hats and gloves—wasted no time as they packed vials into boxes. They scanned the packages and then placed them into freezer cases with dry ice. The vaccines were then taken from Pfizer's Portage, Michigan, facility to Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids, where the first cargo plane took off amid what airport officials called a "jubilant" mood.

"This is a historic day," said Richard W. Smith, who oversees operations in the Americas for FedEx Express, which is delivering 630-some packages of vaccine to distribution sites across the country. The United Parcel Service also is transporting a share of the vaccine.

Helping with the transport of the vaccine has special meaning to Bruce Smith, a FedEx package handler at the Grand Rapids airport, whose older sister, Queen, died after she contracted the coronavirus in May. She was hospitalized in Georgia one day after he saw her on a video chat, and they never spoke again.

"I think she would be ecstatic to know that something that has ravaged our family—that a family member is going to be part of such a big project," said Smith, 58, whose nephew, Queen's son, also got sick and is still undergoing therapy for stroke-like symptoms. "It is very, very important."

Tracked with GPS-enabled sensors, the initial shipments were expected to contain about 3 million doses, with many more to come. Federal officials say the first shipments of Pfizer's vaccine will be staggered, arriving in 145 distribution centers Monday, with another 425 sites getting shipments Tuesday, and the remaining 66 on Wednesday. Doses of the vaccine, co-developed by German partner BioNTech, are given out based on each state's adult population. Then the states decide where they go first.

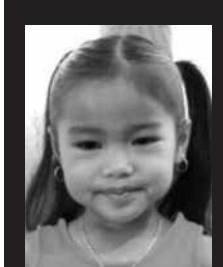
In California, where health care workers will be among the first to be vaccinated, state health officials are prioritizing hospitals that have adequate storage capacity, serve high-risk populations and have the ability to vaccinate people quickly.

Initial surveys have found that even some health care workers don't want to be first in line. Dr. Graham Snyder, who's led the vaccine task force at Pennsylvania health care giant UPMC, estimates that about half of its employees are willing to get the vaccine as soon as it's offered.

But many health officials expect enthusiasm to grow.

"There's that thought that maybe they don't have to be so afraid to come to work if they can be vaccinated and be immune," said Dr. Sandra Kemmerly, medical director of hospital quality at the 40-hospital Oschner Health System in Louisiana and Mississippi. Employees approved for the first round are getting texts and emails directing them to schedule their initial injection, she said. Enough vaccine is being saved so that each person who gets the first dose of vaccine can get a second shot a few weeks later.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



Happy birthday greetings go out to Savannah Emmalyn Ortiguerra and to Virgilio Castaneda, who are both celebrating birthdays today! I wish you both all the best and happiness in life! I love you both very much. Greetings coming from Mary Jane Montano in Reno, Nevada.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Group turns over refurbished social hall to Tinian church

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Tinian Social Hall in San Jose, Tinian, that was destroyed during Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018 has been refurbished and was officially turned over to the Tinian San Jose Catholic Church last Sunday, Dec. 13, with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres himself leading to turnover ceremony that was also attended by Bishop Ryan Jimenez of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa.

For now, the social hall will be the place where the people of Tinian will use as their temporary place of worship until the church, which was also damaged by Super Typhoon Yutu, gets a new facelift.

Kimberlyn King-Hinds, who led the ad-hoc organization that was created to lead the rebuilding effort, The Friends of San Jose, credited many people's help for the success of the project. "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it, a day that would not have been possible without every single one of you who have joined us today," said King-Hinds. Besides holding so much history and memories, she said that the building is a representation of hope for the people in the Tinian community, a hope for better days.

King-Hinds commended Torres' leadership throughout the whole pandemic because the Tinian community is able to celebrate the turnover in person and not through any online platforms.

Tinian's Fr. Anthony Aguason held his final Mass in Tinian's church last Sunday; he will now hold Masses in the newly renovated social hall, which now also has new living quarters for the priest.

"I think that by the sheer grace of God, Påli [Aguason] has not fallen through the ceiling, from the second floor, honestly, because I've been up there and living conditions are very poor. Påli has been literally living out of his suitcase, he can't even fully utilize his comfort room because the infrastructure is so compromised," said King-Hinds. "I pray that this temporary place of worship provides solace, comfort, and hope during our most difficult times. I pray that it will also be a place where we celebrate and give thanks, and grace for life›s most precious gifts."

Jerry Tan, chief executive officer of TanHoldings, which was a key donor, credited the effort and help of the company's charitable arm, the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, and the TSL team, who worked tirelessly on this project. He recounted that, although the foundation has already committed a lot to Saipan after Super Typhoon Yutu, he said knew he really wanted to help Tinian. He recognized TSL Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino, who was able to find a way to donate to the Friends of San Jose Church.

"I did not expect this to be done today. I thought it would take much longer, whether it is to raise all the necessary funds, or just the construction work itself," said Tan. "Things take time to happen, to complete, over here [Tinian]. Kimberlyn, I just want to say thank you also for giving me, our company, our foundation, the opportunity to get involved with such an important project for the people," said Tan.

Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan said the people of Tinian will now have a safer place to worship, one that will allow them to comply with COVID-19 guidelines. "We're very grateful for the donations and contributions from the companies and the governor›s office, and also to the people of Tinian."

According to Teruko King of The Friends of San Jose, donations reached a total of $331,159.10. Construction and expenses to date has reached about $250,042.

Originally, King said, they budgeted $10,000 for furniture and appliances but they were able to get discounts or donations and they only spent $6,582.26.

Miscellaneous expenses, which includes utilities, bank fees, and ceremonial expenses for Sunday's event, documentation fees, brought expenses to a total of $2,198.04. This brings them to a grand total of $259,220.92 in expenses, leaving them with a balance of $71,938.18.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, fourth from right, is joined by other Friends of San Jose Church, key donors, and Bishop Ryan Jiminez during the turnover of the refurbished Tinian Social Hall in San Jose, Tinian, to the Tinian San Jose Catholic Church last Sunday, Dec. 13.

JUSTINE NAUTA

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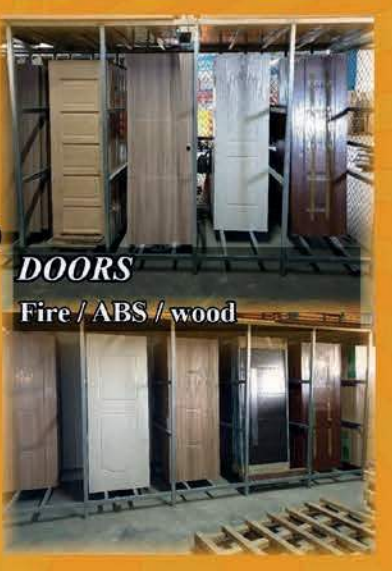

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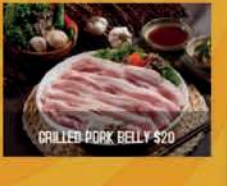

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PUBLIC NOTICE

MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios through the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on ***Tuesday, December 22, 2020, 9:30AM*** at the BECQ 3rd Floor Conference Room, in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through Google Meet (https://meet.google.com/nox-oydp-bix) or join via telephone by calling the DCRM office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of October 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes

II. PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW

1) CRM Permit Application No. SMS-2020-X-048
Project: NEW HOPE QUARRY OPERATION
Applicant: Success International Corporation
Success International Corporation is proposing to operate the New Hope Quarry by producing manufactured sand, aggregates of different sizes, and limestone coral using various heavy equipment such a rock-crusher and a future batching plant facility. The quarry site is situated on leased public land identified as Lot No. 011 C 04, with 47,018 square meters of land. The applicant is also proposing to construct a 2-story building structure using two ocean freight cargo containers.
   a. Agencies' Discussion
   b. Agencies' Determination

2) CRM Permit Amendment Application No. SMS-96-X-20-A1
Project: WINNERS COMMERCIAL FACILITIES
Applicant: P&A Corporation
P&A Corporation is amending its existing commercial operations to include additional services such as (1) roller skating arena; (2) commercial laundry facility; (3) guest house accommodations; and (4) shallow above-ground children's wading pool. The development is situated on a leased private property identified as Lot No. 550NEW-15, measuring about 12,000 square meters, more or less, in Afetnas, Saipan.
   a. Agencies' Discussion
   b. Agencies' Determination

3) CRM Permit Application No. SMS-2016-X-088
Project: PHASE I AND PHASE II, ROUTE 33 BEACH ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
Applicant: Department of Public Works
The Department of Public Works (DPW) is proposing to commence the Phase I and Phase II Route 33 Beach Road project to alleviate traffic safety hazards and inconveniences by repairing, modifying, and improving road conditions. Phase I will be begin from Pacific Islands Club Beach Road to Beach Road-As Perdido Intersection Traffic Light. Phase II will begin from Beach Road-As Perdido Intersection Traffic Light to Atkins Kroll Toyota Intersection Traffic Light in Oleai, Saipan.
   a. Agencies' Discussion
   b. Agencies' Determination

III. OTHER MATTERS
IV. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony regarding the above agenda items. (NOTE: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session).

/s/ JANICE E. CASTRO
Director, DCRM

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-CHCC/CGC-DRP-002

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"OFFICE LEASE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-HT/PH-MCHB-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"OFFICE LEASE - TINIAN"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-OPIOID-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 22, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"SUD/OUD COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

ROAD CONSTRUCTION ON TINIAN

Seabees assigned to U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3's Detail Tinian execute asphalt paving operations in support of Marpo Heights Road G construction on Tinian. The Marpo Heights road improvement project is a Department of Defense innovative readiness training mission that leverages DoD unit core capabilities combined with local resource contributions to produce mission-ready forces, civil-military partnerships, and stronger communities.

U.S. NAVY/CE3R MARCUS HENLEY

Public comments sought once more on draft CSDP plan

The CNMI community is being invited to learn more and to offer comments on the draft "Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan" that the Office of Planning and Development is creating for the CNMI.

The plan's contents and process—now available at https://opd.gov.mp/csdp/—will be discussed in two virtual meetings this week:

■ Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2pm (Saipan Mayor's Office)

■ Thursday, Dec. 17, 2pm (Business Incubation Center, RHS, Rota)

The Office of Planning and Development, under the CNMI Office of the Governor is mandated to work with the Planning and Development Advisory Council to create the CSDP. This plan aims to provide guidance for the sustainable development of the CNMI's economy and infrastructure, both in the short and long term. Part of the CDSP will be a statement of development objectives, standards, and principles to guide the use of land in the CNMI for residential, recreational, agricultural, commercial, and other uses and which includes protections to enhance the quality of the environment and preserve the CNMI's natural beauty and historical heritage.

Draft outlines of the "Visioning" themes, goals, and objectives were shared in July and September with a request for feedback from planning partners and community stakeholders. This feedback, as well as action planning elements from various partner agencies, has been incorporated into each update of the draft CDSP. Last Nov. 10, 2020, a public notice and comment period was announced for three of these components—two watershed management plans and the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The new virtual meetings this week follow the Dec. 9 public meeting at the Tinian Public Library and are intended to solicit feedback from community stakeholders regarding these three plans, as required by Public 20-20.

Email planning@opd.gov.mp if you would like more information or would like to register for these e-meetings. More information on these meetings will be forthcoming from OPD through a variety of channels to ensure that anyone who is interested has the opportunity to participate.

The current working draft of the CSDP was also announced on Nov. 10 and is currently available for public review and comment. Comments are requested by Dec. 18, 2020, via email to planning@opd.gov.mp so that additional feedback can be incorporated into the next update of the CSDP. The community is also invited to take the OPD's visioning and guiding values surveys. ***(PR)***

Toys for Tots campaign draws more supporters

It's just 10 days before Christmas and the Saipan Toys for Tots campaign is halfway through its collection season.

Spearheaded this year by the Associated Students of the Northern Marianas College in collaboration with the Saipan Young Professionals of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Marine Corps, the campaign continues to draw partners who have stepped up to collect toys and monetary donations for toy purchases to support children in the CNMI this year.

One such partner, Mobil Marianas, recently donated $1,500 to the 2020 campaign. "With Covid-19, 2020 has been a difficult year for our community. Our Mobil operators wanted to support the… program this year to make sure that families, especially children, can feel the holiday spirit despite the many things that are happening right now," said the company in a statement.

The CNMI Bar Association also donated $500 to the campaign, electing to forego its annual holiday party and instead use the funds "to spread some holiday cheer to the children by giving this donation to Toys for Tots."

Since October, the campaign has managed over 30 Toys for Tots drop-off locations around the island. These partners are: Assurance Brokers; Atkins Kroll; Bank of Guam; Bank of Saipan; BankPacific; Bridge Capital; Bubba Gump; Calvo's Insurance; Club 88; CNMI Homeland Security & Emergency Management; CNMI Mayor's Office; Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan; First Hawaiian Banks; Gold's Gym; Great Harvest; Hyatt Regency Saipan; Jesus Is Lord Church; Latte Built Gym; Lollipops; McDonald's of Saipan; Mobil Stations; Northern Marianas College; Pacifica Insurance; Payless Superfresh & Truckload Store, Pena House; Saipan Seventh Day Adventist School; Saipan Vegas; Shirley's Coffee Shop; Surf Club Saipan; Surfrider Hotel; Take Care Insurance; Tan Siu Lin Foundation; Tribe Marianas; and Triple J Motors.

Mobil Marianas recently made a $1,500 donation to the 2020 Toys for Tots program. This year's program is spearheaded by the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Saipan Young Professionals. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

All contributions will be given back to the community through collaboration with beneficiaries such as Karidat, Salvation Army, CHCC-Maternal & Child Health Bureau, and the Department of Youth Services. For more information on how you can make a donation or include your organization as a beneficiary, call 234 -7150 or email saipantoys4tots@gmail.com.

The Toys for Tots campaign accepts donations of new unwrapped toys that will be handed out to disadvantaged children this holiday season. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-005

A-2, A-5 AND A-6 SEWER LIFT STATION RENOVATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the renovation of the existing A-2, A-5 and A-6 sewer lift stations, including but not limited to the renovation of the existing generator buildings or the construction of a new generator building, the renovation or relocation of the wet wells with all new pipings, fittings, pumps, generators, and other equipment and appurtenances. The project also includes the installation of a temporary by-pass system and the relocation of existing utilities to accommodate construction activities. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in ***365* calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on December 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-005, A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) January 6, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 18, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water & Wastewater, Engineer nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR A&E SERVICES
CUC-RAES-21-012

Engineering Consulting Services for CUC's Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed RAES Proposals from qualified firms for engineering consultant services for CUC's solar photovoltaic and renewable energy systems in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RAES package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the AES Proposal marked *"CUC-RAES-21-012, Engineering Consulting Services for CUC's Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems"*, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than December 30, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit RAES Proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the RAES Proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RAES requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RAES under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RAES under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 15, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Anne Crockett, CUC Senior Electrical Engineer via email address anne.crocket@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior, via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all RAES Proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RAES, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All RAES Proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Goodbye to Betsy DeVos, who survived by accomplishing almost nothing

When Betsy DeVos took the job as the nation's chief educator, she probably never imagined that a pandemic would strike, requiring her to exert actual leadership in extremely difficult circumstances. It's a role for which she is utterly unqualified. From the time of her confirmation hearings, when she betrayed her ignorance about the controversy surrounding how best to measure student progress, it was clear that DeVos had neither the expertise nor the skills required for even the most basic version of the job.

What she did have were three goals, which became clear once she went to work: Push funding for private and religious schools at the expense of public schools; strip college students of protection from predatory for-profit colleges and place them in difficult financial straits on their student loans; and weaken civil rights protections for transgender students.

In other words, for a president who has no interest in improving the educational lot of students, DeVos has been a perfect and thus particularly long-serving Cabinet member.

As COVID-19 swept through the nation and shut down more than 120,000 schools, the Education Department's role should have been one of the most important in government, just after those of the agencies trying to protect health and boost the economy. The loss of months of learning as students and teachers went online has been among the nation's biggest disasters.

DeVos could have been supporting schools, lobbying for more money and personal protective gear to help them reopen, providing lesson plans and model online curriculum for them to follow, and conducting research on the best safety practices for on-campus learning. Instead, her main contributions were to tell schools they had to reopen full-time for all students even where health officials were saying it was still unsafe, and to try to funnel pandemic funding intended for disadvantaged students into private schools. The courts stopped that bit of fiscal malpractice.

Thankfully, the courts ruled against her often, especially on the question of whether students who had been duped by shady practices at certain for-profit colleges had to continue paying off their loans. In fact, the best news is that DeVos has accomplished very little during her tenure, stopped repeatedly by lawmakers and judges unwilling to go along with her agenda.

But it's time for actual work on the nation's schools to begin. President-elect Joe Biden, who wants to reopen most schools by May, already has outlined two of the most pressing items: setting guidelines for when schools should reopen and how they should go about doing it, and getting more money to schools to cover the cost of the smaller classes and extra substitute teachers necessitated by the pandemic.

The new administration needs to make safe reopening a top priority. Neither today's kids nor the nation as a whole can afford to lose this much learning.

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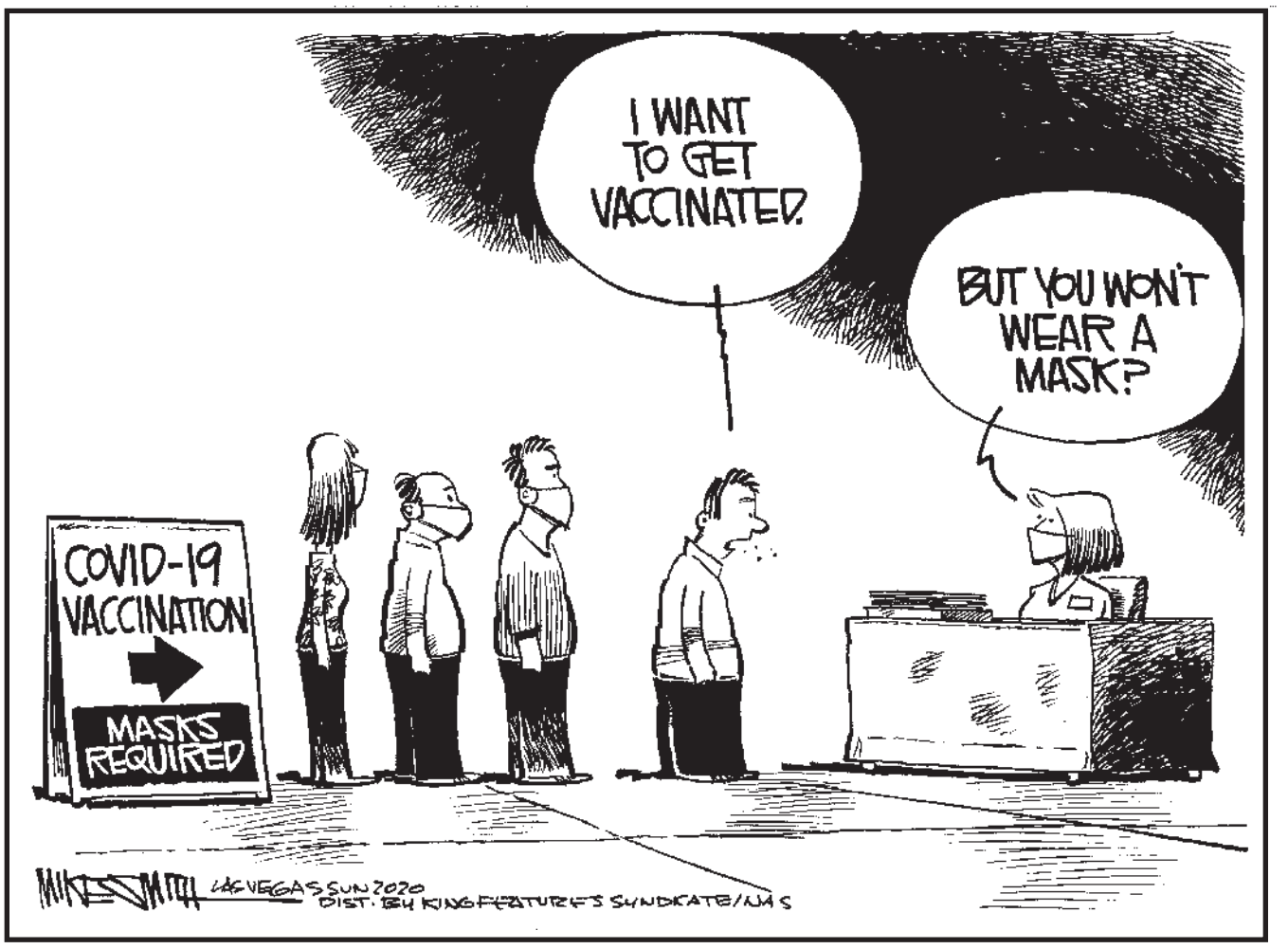
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BUT YOU WON'T WEAR A MASK?
COVID-19 VACCINATION
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Will 2020 mark the end of election polling as we know it?

By DOUG SCHWARTZ
Los Angeles Times

Doug Schwartz is associate vice president and director of the Quinnipiac University Poll.

Donald Trump was not the first presidential candidate to perform notably better on election day than pre-election polling had predicted. Ronald Reagan did it in the 1980 election. So did Bob Dole in 1996.

Still, the gap between the 2020 polling and the actual results has caused considerable dismay. Since the election, a lot of people have asked the same question: "What went wrong with the polling?"

I've been leading the Quinnipiac University Poll for over 25 years. And while a lot of work remains before there is a final diagnosis of this year's election polls, I don't think it will show that polling has lost its value. I already see some early indicators of what went right—as well as wrong—this year.

In general, public opinion polls have had a good track record over the last 100 years. However, election polls have never been perfect, nor should that be expected. Uncertainty is part of the equation—whether because of the margin of error, who turns out to vote or the number of undecided voters. And this year had more than its fair share of unpredictability, with a global pandemic, record voter turnout and major procedural changes in the way Americans voted with mail-in ballots.

Some believe that President Trump himself may have introduced an added level of uncertainty in gauging public opinion. Since the 2016 election, many have discussed the possibility of the "shy" Trump voter—voters who didn't want to admit their support for Trump to pollsters. A task force created by the American Assn. for Public Opinion Research analyzed the performance of the 2016 election polls and did not find evidence of such voters, but it's worth investigating whether such a phenomenon happened this year.

In Quinnipiac's polls leading up to the election, about 1 in 10 likely voters wouldn't say who they had already voted for or indicated that they either weren't sure or wouldn't share who they were voting for. Despite the unusually high number of voters not revealing their vote preference, post-election analysis shows that our poll and others were generally accurate on the percentage of Joe Biden's support, but underestimated Trump's support.

While this analysis is preliminary, it could certainly suggest that some of the voters who did not share their vote preference ended up voting for Trump. Election polls will need to explore strategies to better capture the intentions of this undecided segment of the electorate, such as developing enhanced follow-ups for those reluctant to disclose vote preference and new ways to build trust between respondents and interviewers.

Couple this dynamic with historic voter turnout, and the uncertainty in polling estimations starts to really stack up. Because polling analysis makes assumptions about voter turnout, whenever turnout is unusually high or low there is increased risk that the polls will be less accurate. It is possible that more Trump voters showed up than expected on election day, and/or fewer Biden voters did. We may have a clearer picture when we get the final reports of exit polls in the next few weeks.

Another factor this year is the unprecedented amount of mail-in and early voting, which may have encouraged new or infrequent voters to participate. Without a history of party allegiance, these voters could be more likely to change their minds, further adding to unpredictability in the election outcomes.

Pollsters face a number of methodological challenges that must be reviewed as part of this post-election analysis. For example, with state polls often limited to calling voters with phone numbers that are local to a particular state, pollsters are exploring how to contact individuals who have out-of-state cellphone numbers but live (and vote) in the state being polled. And, as many Americans continue to abandon landlines, would polls be improved if pollsters relied even less on calling people at those numbers?

A possible solution includes integrating data gathered using different forms of communication such as email and text with phone surveys. Pollsters could also consider reducing the amount of completed surveys that come from landlines, increasing those from cellphones or even dropping landline calling altogether since a cellphone-based sample may be more representative of the general population.

Polls cannot provide pinpoint accuracy nor should that be expected since they are still an estimate of a snapshot in time. But the polling industry provides a valuable service in taking the pulse of the American electorate on key issues and voting intentions.

It is reasonable for the public to expect the polls to come closer to the mark than they did this year, and pollsters will need to review their methods and make necessary adjustments. This doesn't mean polling is irrevocably broken, but it does need a tuneup.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Blended families: Plan ahead or expect problems

FINE PRINT
By JORDAN SUNDELL
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jordan Sundell is a lawyer. His practice primarily focuses on business, real estate, estate planning, and asset protection. You can find his columns here every other Tuesday as well as on The Fine Print on Facebook. You can contact Sundell via this newspaper at editor@saipantribune.com or 235-6397/235-2440.

When people say "family," what images come to mind? Traditionally, family meant a husband and wife who had a few children together. But these days family has many iterations beyond the traditional nuclear family. And some of those combinations are especially ripe for unexpected trouble after you pass away—unless you plan ahead.

Consider, for example, blended families. These families are ones where a spouse (or both) have at least one child from a previous marriage or relationship. These arrangements work fine when everyone is alive and well but once one parent passes away, that parent's kids can be in for a world of disappointment.

To see why, let's look at perhaps the most-famous blended family—the Brady Bunch. When Mike and Carol Brady married, each brought three children into the marriage. Mike had three boys and Carol three girls. Fortunately, Mike and Carol managed to raise the kids as one big, happy family. But let's fast forward a few decades: What would have happened if Mike died before Carol?

Scenario #1: If Mike died intestate (meaning that he died without a will or revocable living trust), then his property would go to Carol consistent with their state's intestacy laws. In other words, Carol would get most of Mike's stuff.

Now let's say that Carol dies a few years later without creating a will or getting married again. All of her stuff goes to her daughters. Mike's sons, on the other hand, get nothing.

And if Carol married, and then died intestate, the result would be even more troubling because Carol's new husband, not Mike's sons, would get the lion's share of Mike's property.

Scenario #2: This time let's assume that Mike, Carol, and the kids were not one, big happy family; and that Mike died intestate before Carol. What could happen?

As before, intestacy law would strongly favor Carol. And, so, in many cases she could stop Mike's sons from visiting the family home or receiving sentimental mementos. And, worse, she could guarantee that most of Mike's wealth would go to her daughters rather than Mike's sons.

As we can see, blended families pose troubling issues, whether or not the blended family likes each other. Fortunately, by being proactive, these troubles can be banished before storm clouds have a chance to gather.

Step one: Act now. Don't wait until you get sick or hurt. Make a plan *years* before you think you will need it.

Step two: Tell your family the plan, preferably in person and again in writing. Disclosure early can cure many ills later.

Step three: Regularly update your plan to keep up with current events. For example, if one of your kids takes care of you while others don't, you may want that kid to receive more since they did more.

Step four: Notify your family about the updates, preferably in person and again in writing.

Now that you know you need a plan, what should it look like? It depends on your circumstances. But generally speaking, here are three things to consider.

To begin, a simple will is normally too simple to address the complexities of a blended family. Don't create a will that simply says your assets will pass to your spouse—unless you want your spouse to have the power to cut off your biological kids after you are gone.

For another, think hard about creating a trust rather than a will. The advantage here is that a trust is a vastly more flexible tool than a will for passing your wealth. For example, a properly drafted trust can protect your kids' access to your assets if your spouse gets remarried. And it can be written to leave assets for your spouse during their lifetime and then, after they pass, transferring what is left over to your kids—not some random person that your spouse might fall for later.

Finally, consider putting some of your assets into accounts that will automatically transfer to your kids when you die, so that they are taken care of regardless of what your spouse does. For instance, you can go to your bank, fill out a form designating your beneficiary and, voila, the designated beneficiary will receive that account when you pass. These accounts (which are known as pay-on-death accounts, informal trusts, or Totten trusts) have several advantages: They're free, easy to create, and simple to use for your designated beneficiary.

But if you set up one of these accounts, remember to regularly review it. It would be a bummer if you originally selected one of your kids, had a falling out with them, but accidentally left them as the designated beneficiary. In that case, it doesn't matter that you did not want them to receive anything. They would still get the account because you didn't update the beneficiary.

In sum, while blended families have become common, they are by no means easy. Indeed, they provide fertile ground for family drama. But with some thoughtful planning, this rich soil need not reap unexpected trouble.

This column is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be taken as legal advice. For your specific case, consult a lawyer.

Facebook has only itself to blame for drastic remedy

By JOE NOCERA
Bloomberg Opinion

Joe Nocera is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering business. He has written business columns for Esquire, GQ and the* New York Times*, and is the former editorial director of Fortune. His latest project is the Bloomberg-Wondery podcast* The Shrink Next Door.

Mark Zuckerberg always knew.

In 2012, when Instagram was 2 years old, with 13 employees and no obvious path to profitability, Zuckerberg knew that the fast-growing photo app was a potential threat to Facebook Inc.'s social media dominance. "Instagram can hurt us," he wrote in an email. In an internal discussion about whether to buy Instagram—and other startups that might one day pose a threat to Facebook's social media monopoly—he added, "The basic plan would be to buy these companies and leave their products running while over time incorporating the social dynamics they've invented into our core products."

Kevin Systrom, Instagram's co-founder, knew something, too. He knew that angering Zuckerberg might cause the "wrath of Mark" to come down on his still-fragile company and cause Facebook's founder to go into "destroy mode," as he put it in a text message to one of Instagram's early investors. Yes, Instagram might one day become a significant competitor to Facebook—but it was also possible that Facebook would clone Instagram's technology and put the startup out of business. So in April 2012, when Zuckerberg offered to pay $1 billion for the company, Systrom and the Instagram board said yes.

But when it sought to get the deal approved by the Federal Trade Commission in the U.S. and the Office of Fair Trading in the U.K., Facebook argued with a straight face that there was plenty of competition from other photo apps like Camera Awesome. And the two government agencies were also convinced that because Instagram had no revenue, a merger with Facebook wouldn't meaningfully add to its market share. The two regulators took only four months to approve the deal. But of course they didn't know what Zuckerberg and Systrom knew.

On Wednesday afternoon, the FTC and 48 attorneys general filed dual antitrust suits designed to undo the merger of Facebook and Instagram—as well as Facebook's takeover of WhatsApp, another potential rival that it bought in 2014 for a staggering $19 billion. (WhatsApp also had no revenue and 55 employees at the time Facebook bought it.)

This is a radical proposition—the U.S. government hasn't contemplated breaking up a company since the Justice Department sued Microsoft in 1998. But I've long believed that there is simply no other way to curb Facebook's immense monopoly power.

In the attorneys general complaint, the plaintiffs contend that Facebook employs a "buy-or-bury strategy that thwarts competition and harms both users and advertisers." One would be hard pressed to disagree. Venture capitalists are so fearful of Facebook's ruthless tactics they simply won't fund startups that Zuckerberg might view as competition, no matter how insignificant. Thus is innovation stifled, as is competition itself.

As a result, the plaintiffs contend, social media consumers don't have legitimate choices. If they don't like Facebook's privacy policies, or if they want fewer ads, or are offended by Facebook's unwillingness to face squarely the amount of disinformation on its platform, what are their options? Move to Instagram? Or WhatsApp? They are still in Facebook's universe, which can still use their data to make oodles of money.

Zuckerberg has apologized a dozen times or more for some Facebook missteps and promised to do better. Nothing much changes. Facebook agreed to a settlement with the FTC in 2012 over what the agency called "privacy-related violations"—and then had to pay a $5 billion fine seven years later for violating the terms of that settlement. One reason to break up Facebook is that less onerous remedies have simply failed to make a difference. Facebook has proved again and again that it doesn't take government mandates seriously.

The second reason to break up Facebook is that it is the only way to create competition in the social media business—and to create it instantly. Instagram now has more than 1 billion monthly active users. WhatsApp has more than 1.6 billion. What's more, before Facebook bought them, the two companies had much different approaches to matters such as privacy and even profitability.

It's no secret that government antitrust cases are difficult to win in court, where judges have heavily favored consolidation in recent decades. Facebook will argue—as it already has—that it won government approval of the deals fair and square. "Years after the FTC cleared our acquisitions, the government now wants a do-over," the company said in a tweet.

But reducing Facebook's power is one of the few issues that Republicans and Democrats agree on, and as my colleague Tae Kim notes, David Cicilline, the chair of the House antitrust subcommittee, would be well served to craft a bill that would make it easier to curb the power of the big technology companies, starting with Facebook.

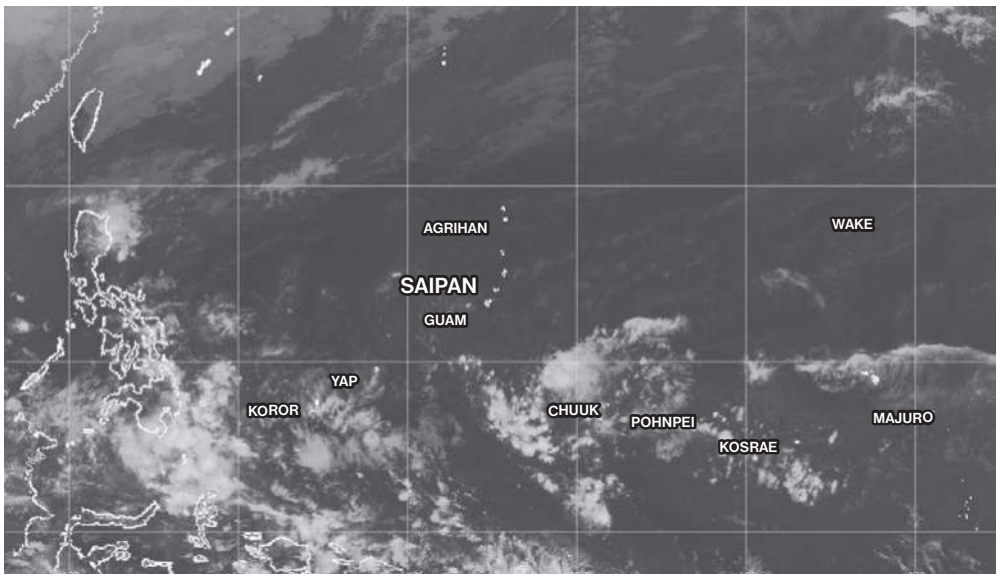
As for the antitrust suits, breaking up Facebook isn't just the right solution, it's the only solution.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:38 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A minor trade-wind trough has been treating Guam to scattered showers overnight, but satellite imagery shows the showers decreasing and mostly west of Guam, while Rota, Tinian and Saipan are partly cloudy with isolated showers. Moderate to fresh trade winds are present, and seas are around 5 feet at the buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Wednesday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:50 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:51 AM	6:22 PM	-
Wednesday	7:55 AM	7:24 PM	-
Thursday	8:54 AM	8:25 PM	-
Friday	9:47 AM	9:23 PM	-
Saturday	10:35 AM	10:19 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 64°
Beijing	Sunny	36° / 18°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	68° / 55°
Honolulu	Showers	76° / 67°
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 32°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	79° / 51°
Manila	Showers	81° / 73°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	77° / 55°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	76° / 64°
New York	Cloudy	33° / 30°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	52° / 36°
Paris	Showers	43° / 34°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	41° / 21°
Rome	Showers	55° / 54°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	60° / 37°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	61° / 49°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	30° / 12°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 37°
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	38° / 30°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:50 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.82
8:54 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.86
2:16 PM	LOW TIDE	1.05
7:09 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.91

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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Business

International Roller Skates *reopens* in San Antonio

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

BEA CABRERA

International Roller Skates in San Antonio is back in business with health and safety procedures in place for employees and customers.

Established in February this year, International Roller Skates located at the Winner's Compound in San Antonio was tagged as the islands' first roller skating arcade. However, it was forced to close a month later due to COVID-19 concerns.

IRS reopened in September, tested the market, and is now operating every day to keep up with the community's demand for an activity that will keep them healthy and entertained during the pandemic.

For more information, call (670) 235-2560

According to P&A Corp. general manager Doyi Kim, since roller skating is a contact sport, they used the six months that IRS was closed to prepare and re-asses procedures that will ensure health and safety of both employees and customers.

"We wanted to open earlier but we had to abide by the government and [the Governor's] COVID-19 Task Force's rules and regulations. We wanted to be responsible and responsive… sanitizing and social distancing may be easy for other businesses like a restaurant but we knew we had to plan thoroughly, be careful, and at least try to do our best," she said.

"Part of preparing the arcade, amenities, and gear, we sanitize everyday to prepare for operations the following day…we let customers in by batches if they are a group, check their temperature, get their names and contact numbers…the pads and gloves we steam dry them so the heat will kill the germs and as for the whole arcade, the skating rink including the roller skates, we purchased a special kind of machine from Korea that can sanitize even hard to reach areas," she added.

Kim said that wearing masks and social distancing are in place and as extra precaution, they remain conservative when it comes to the number of people they accept in the arcade.

"Currently, establishments can accept at least 75% of maximum occupancy. For our part, we still decided to cut down customers to only 30% or maximum of 50 people in the arcade just to make sure…we don't have plans of opening for a bigger scale of customers yet… this way, everybody is safe, can practice social distance, and enjoy their skating experience and enjoy [the] amenities."

"We also accept private rentals for special occasions—minimum of 15 people and maximum of 50. On weekdays, it's $200 for the first 30 people and add $9 for additional persons. On weekends, it's $300 for the first 30 people and add $10 for additional persons. Rental is by session or two hours… guests can bring their own food and cake except for drinks which they can purchase from our café…If they want to purchase food from our café, we offer pizza, chips, hot corn dogs, Hot Pockets, cotton candy (currently free), and our newly added entrée, nachos," she added.

Aside from roller skating, customers can enjoy amenities such as Speedy Hockey, basketball shooting, darts, slides, and trampoline. A recent addition is a karaoke machine located at the stage.

"We try to keep improving so we can serve the community better. This is the vision of my father and president of P&A Corp., Hong Kyun Kim. He built the Winner's Compound to have apartments, car rentals, a restaurant… a 'Happy Hut' (like a *pala-pala*) where people can hang out anytime so that both tourists and locals will have a common place to meet, mingle, and share their unique cultures…Since we are in a small island, my father wants Winner's Compound to be a big special place on Saipan… IRS is the recent addition," Kim said.

"Future plans include starting the 'K Pop Dance Academy' where we will teach locals various style of K Pop dance which is popular and taught by dancers that will fly from Korea. Early next year, we plan to open horseback riding which is something new to the island and Winner's Fresh Meat Market in Garapan… we find that our community is always ready and open for novelty [activities] and that's why we work hard and always challenge the community to try and experience something new," she added.

Aside from roller skating, other entertainment amenities are also open.

BEA CABRERA

IRS is open Monday-Sunday with Session 1 from 4:30pm to 6:30pm and Session 2 from 7pm to 9pm (except Friday) for only $10. Friday Session 2 is from 7pm to 9 pm for only $12 and Saturday/Sunday Session 3 is from 7pm to 9pm for only $12. IRS management encourages everyone to start sessions on time for maximum enjoyment. Non-skater admission is $5, a five-session pass is only $50, a five-person group pass is only $50, and for roller skating tutorial, add $5.

For more information, call (670) 235-2560 or look them up on Facebook and Instagram "rollersk8_saipan."

Going 'the extra mile': UK, EU keep up Brexit trade talks

BRUSSELS (AP)—Teetering on the brink of a no-deal Brexit departure, Britain and the European Union stepped back from the void Sunday and agreed to continue trade talks, although both downplayed the chances of success.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen ditched a self-imposed deadline and promised to "go the extra mile" to clinch a post-Brexit trade agreement that would avert New Year's chaos and costs for cross-border commerce.

"Where there's life, there's hope," said Johnson, offering little else as rationale to keep on with talks that have struggled to make headway for most of the year and need to be finished before Jan. 1, when the transition period for Britain, which left the EU last January, ends.

With hundreds of thousands of jobs and tens of billions in trade at stake, von der Leyen said after her phone call with Johnson that "we both think it is responsible at this point in time to go the extra mile."

All this, she added, "despite the exhaustion after almost a year of negotiations and despite the fact that deadlines have been missed over and over."

U.K. and EU negotiators were still talking at EU headquarters on Sunday, with less than three weeks to go until the U.K. leaves the economic embrace of the 27-nation bloc.

But their leaders failed to present visible progress on any of the outstanding issues of fair-competition rules, mechanisms for resolving future disputes and fishing rights.

Johnson said the "most likely" outcome was that the two sides wouldn't reach a deal and would trade on World Trade Organization terms, with the tariffs and barriers that would bring.

European Council President Charles Michel warned there could not be a deal "at any price, no. What we want is a good deal, a deal that respects these principles of economic fair play."

Japan 'tankan' business survey shows optimism over recovery

A quarterly survey by the Bank of Japan shows business sentiment has improved sharply with expectations that the economy is recovering from a year-long recession.

The BOJ's "tankan" released Monday reported rebounds in all categories, both manufacturing and nonmanufactuing companies, large and small. It was a marked improvement from the past several quarterly reports as Japan battled the coronavirus pandemic.

The main measure of business conditions of large manufacturers rose to minus 10 from minus 27, while business sentiment among large non-manufacturers such as service industries rose to minus 5 from minus 12. The actual results were better than forecast.

The tankan measures corporate sentiment by subtracting the number of companies saying business conditions are negative from those responding they are positive.

In the summer, sentiment plunged to its lowest level in more than a decade as the pandemic crushed exports and tourism, mainstays for the world's third largest economy.

October's report showed the first improvement in three years after six straight quarters of decline to an 11-year low.

Japan's economy expanded at a 22.9% annual rate in the last quarter, as businesses and personal spending recovered from the pandemic-related shocks in the spring and early summer that worsened a recession that started in late 2019, even before coronavirus outbreaks hit.

As is true for most major economies, the setback dealt by the pandemic has left Japan still at a lower level of economic output, 3.9% below the level of the last quarter of 2019, according to Capital Economics.

"The survey bolsters our view that Japan will recover quickly once the third wave of coronavirus is brought back under control, with output likely to be back at pre-virus levels in mid-2021," said Capital Economics' Japan economist, Tom Learmouth. ***(AP)***

Nation

Biden's challenge: Building Cabinet that meets all his goals

AP

In this Dec. 11, 2020, file photo President-elect Joe Biden, right, listens to Rep. Marcia Fudge, D-Ohio, left, his choice to be housing and urban development secretary, during an event to announce several positions in the Biden administration at The Queen theater in Wilmington, Del.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Shortly after President-elect Joe Biden's victory last month, Cabinet hopeful Marcia Fudge pointedly noted that Black people are often typecast into positions such as housing secretary.

On Friday, Biden announced Fudge, a prominent Black congresswoman from Ohio, was his nominee for that very role. She was introduced alongside Biden's pick for the job she initially sought, head of the Agriculture Department. That went instead to Tom Vilsack, a 70-year-old white man who already spent eight years in the position during the Obama administration.

Those nominations highlight the competing priorities Biden is facing as he fills out the top ranks of his administration. He's pledged to nominate the most diverse Cabinet in history and restore experience at beleaguered federal agencies. He's seeking to reward loyalists who have stood with him throughout his lengthy career and give opportunities to new voices in the Democratic Party.

Each of his nominees has to win confirmation in a narrowly divided Senate that could be controlled by Republicans, depending on who wins two runoff races in Georgia next month. The GOP has barely acknowledged Biden's victory so the cooperation of its senators in the confirmation process is far from certain.

"There's a lot of pressure, and part of the reason you saw such big turnout is that people are eager for change from the Trump years," said Democratic strategist Karen Finney. "That creates a lot of high expectations."

The challenge won't get easier. Biden is facing a decision on attorney general that will come under intense scrutiny from Black leaders, who want someone with a background in civil rights advocacy, and Republicans who are demanding political independence as Biden's son, Hunter, faces a federal investigation into his finances.

Some of those tensions emerged last week during a meeting between Biden and civil rights leaders who pressed the incoming president to diversify his Cabinet and warned about the Vilsack pick in particular. Vilsack has been criticized for the firing of department official Shirley Sherrod, who is Black, during his last stint at the USDA, a move he later apologized for.

NAACP President Derrick Johnson warned Biden that the Vilsack selection could hurt Black turnout in the critical Georgia contests.

"Vilsack could have a disastrous effect on voters in the state of Georgia," NAACP President Derrick Johnson told Biden during the meeting, which was private.

Audio was leaked to The Intercept, which released excerpts.

Biden bristled at such concern, saying, "Let's get something straight, you shouldn't be upset."

"What I've done so far is more than what anyone else has done this far," he added. "I mean what I say."

The president-elect has several more Cabinet posts to fill, and has made history with some of his early selections. He nominated retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin to be the first Black person to lead the Pentagon, while picking California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be the first Latino to lead the Health and Human Services Department. His nominee for U.S. trade envoy, Katherine Tai, was born in Connecticut to Taiwanese parents.

But those choices were announced after African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans in Congress voiced concerns that their perspectives may not be fully represented in the new administration. Some nominees will face other hurdles, most notably Austin who needs a waiver to fill the civilian role leading the Pentagon. That's a step some Democrats have historically opposed.

Biden could further diversify his Cabinet by picking Rep. Deb Haaland of New Mexico as the first Native American interior secretary, giving her authority over a powerful agency that oversees the nation's tribes. But doing so would further erode the razor thin Democratic majority in the House, something Biden can ill afford considering the party's tenuous standing in the Senate.

Trump says he's nixing plan for early vaccine at White House

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump said Sunday that he was reversing an administration directive to vaccinate top government officials against COVID-19, while public distribution of the shot is limited to front-line health workers and people in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Trump made the announcement hours after his administration confirmed that senior U.S. officials, including some White House aides who work in close proximity to Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, would be offered coronavirus vaccines as soon as this week under federal continuity of government plans.

"People working in the White House should receive the vaccine somewhat later in the program, unless specifically necessary," Trump said in a tweet. "I have asked that this adjustment be made. I am not scheduled to take the vaccine, but look forward to doing so at the appropriate time."

It was not immediately clear what the scale of the vaccination program was supposed to be, according to two people briefed on the matter, or what effect Trump's tweet would have on the government's efforts to protect top leadership.

News that White House staff would receive the vaccine early drew criticism on social media. Trump and his aides have consistently flouted the COVID-19 guidelines issued by his own administration, including hosting large holiday parties with maskless attendees this December.

Officials said earlier Sunday that doses of the newly approved vaccine from Pfizer would be made available to those who work in close quarters with the nation's top leaders. They said the move was meant to prevent more COVID-19 spread in the White House and other critical facilities. Trump was hospitalized with the virus for three days in October.

"Senior officials across all three branches of government will receive vaccinations pursuant to continuity of government protocols established in executive policy," National Security Council spokesperson John Ulyot had said. "The American people should have confidence that they are receiving the same safe and effective vaccine as senior officials of the United States government on the advice of public health professionals and national security leadership."

The two people briefed on the matter spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. The New York Times first reported that top U.S. officials would get early access to the vaccine.

The move to vaccinate top U.S. officials would be consistent with the rollout of rapid testing machines for the coronavirus, which were similarly controlled by the federal government with kits reserved to protect the White House complex and other critical facilities.

GOP voters ready for Georgia runoffs despite Trump's claims

ATLANTA (AP)—Many Republican voters in Georgia are angry. They're convinced that widespread voter fraud—claims that are baseless—cost President Donald Trump the election to Democrat Joe Biden.

But will those concerns put them on the sidelines for runoff elections Jan. 5 that will determine party control of the U.S. Senate? No way, said Trump supporter Lori Davis.

"Everyone that I'm around, we're ready to vote now," said the 57-year-old businesswoman, as she awaited the arrival of Vice President Mike Pence at a rally for GOP Sens. David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler in Augusta on Thursday.

Trump has relentlessly promoted false claims that the election was rigged against him and he has savaged Republican elected officials he perceives as standing in the way of his quest to subvert the results. Some Trump allies have gone as far as calling for voters to skip the Georgia runoffs altogether—alarming words for the GOP campaigns banking on a strong turnout.

But interviews with voters and party activists in the state suggest there's little sign that Trump's voters are planning to stay home in protest. Most Republican voters interviewed said they were prepared to put their skepticism aside to vote for Perdue and Loeffler in their races against Democrats Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, respectively.

"There are people who are discouraged about (Trump) losing Georgia or being behind. But I haven't talked to people who've said, 'Oh, the heck with this, it's all rigged anyway,'" said Tim Phillips, president of the conservative group Americans for Prosperity, which has done canvassing of GOP-leaning voters.

Phillips was among those who worried that the distrust could affect Republican enthusiasm. But he said his group's weeks in the field, combined with a recent visit from Trump, have eased his worries.

Trump's Dec. 5 campaign stop in Valdosta, Georgia, was his first since he lost the state to Biden by about 11,700 votes—a result that was confirmed by two recounts, including a hand tally of all ballots. But those recounts haven't stopped the president from blasting Republican Gov. Brian Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

Kemp has rebuffed Trump's call for a special session of the legislature to subvert the election results, while Raffensperger has repeatedly said there is no evidence of systemic fraud or irregularities in the November election.

Asia

Japan, S. Korea set new daily records, mull steps

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's daily coronavirus cases have exceeded 3,000 for the first time while the government delays stricter measures for fear of hurting the economy ahead of the holiday season.

The 3,030 new cases, including 621 in Tokyo, took Japan's national tally to 177,287 with 2,562 deaths, the Health Ministry said Sunday.

Experts say serious cases are on the rise around the country, putting an extra burden on hospitals and affecting the daily medical treatment for other patients. They urged authorities to take measures such as suspending out-of-town trips and requesting stores to close early.

Recent media surveys show support ratings for the government of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga have dropped about 20 points from around 70% during his first three months in office amid public discontent over his coronavirus handling.

Japan issued a nonbinding state of emergency in the spring and has survived earlier infection peaks without a lockdown. Experts say the ongoing resurgence in the dry and cold season would be a bigger challenge.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ South Korea has set another record for its daily coronavirus tally with 1,030, as authorities struggle to suppress the virus's spread. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said Sunday the additional cases including two deaths raised the national caseload to 42,766 with 580 fatalities. About 80% of the new cases were found in the densely populated Seoul area, where authorities have shut nightclubs and other high-risk venues, banned late-night dining and taken other steps to slow the spread. But such measures have shown little effect. Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said Saturday his government may have to enforce its highest-level social distancing rules if the virus doesn't slow down. Such restrictions would ban a gathering of more than 10 people, shut down schools, theaters and department stores and suspend professional sports leagues.

■ Chinese authorities have locked down an area of more than 250,000 people after half a dozen coronavirus cases were confirmed near the Russian border in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang. Checkpoints have been set up in Dongning and Suifenhe, and people were told not to leave unless necessary. Bus service has been suspended, schools closed and production halted at factories not making daily necessities. Restaurants were told to stop dine-in service and residential communities to control entry. Four cases have been confirmed since Thursday in Suifenhe and two in Dongning. China, where the coronavirus first emerged late last year, has moved swiftly to stamp out any reappearance of the virus. The National Health Commission reported 24 new cases nationwide, including four in Heilongjiang and another in Sichuan province in the southwest. The other 19 were imported from outside China.

Trump raises China concerns as reason to veto defense bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump offered a new rationale Sunday for threatening to veto the annual defense policy bill that covers the military's budget for equipment and pay raises for service members: China. He did not outline his concerns.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers say the wide-ranging defense policy bill, which the Senate sent to the president on Friday, would be tough on China and must become law as soon as possible.

Both the House and Senate passed the measure by margins large enough to override a potential veto from the president, who has a history of failing to carry out actions he has threatened.

"The biggest winner of our new defense bill is China! I will veto!" Trump said in a new tweet.

The White House did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment on Trump's specific concerns about China.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said the bill would help deter Chinese aggression. Other GOP backers of the measure, including Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the second-ranking Senate leader, and Rep. Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, have tweeted that the bill would counter threats from countries such as China.

Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Trump's declaration that China is the biggest winner in the defense bill is false. Reed also noted the shifting explanations Trump has given for the veto threats.

"President Trump clearly hasn't read the bill, nor does he understand what's in it," Reed said. "There are several bipartisan provisions in here that get tougher on China than the Trump Administration has ever been."

A potential override of a veto would be a first for Trump and would come not long before he leaves office Jan. 20. A two-thirds vote is needed in each chamber for the bill to become law without Trump's signature.

The president has made numerous threats over Twitter to veto the bill over a requirement that military bases honoring Confederate leaders eventually be renamed. He also threatened a veto to try to force lawmakers to include provisions—unrelated to the military and national defense—to punish social media companies he claims were biased against him during the election.

Congress has approved the bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, for nearly 60 years in a row. The current version affirms 3% pay raises for U.S. troops and authorizes more than $740 billion in military programs and construction.

The measure guides Pentagon policy and cements decisions about troop levels, new weapons systems and military readiness, military personnel policy and other military goals. Many programs can only go into effect if the bill is approved, including military construction.

McConnell, in a rare break with Trump, had urged passage despite Trump's threat to veto it. McConnell said it was important for Congress to continue its nearly six-decade long streak of passing the defense policy bill.

In addition to the budget and pay raises it would provide, McConnell said the bill will "keep our forces ready to deter China and stand strong in the Indo-Pacific."

World

A nurse tends to a patient inside a COVID-19 intensive care unit of the Tor Vergata Polyclinic Hospital in Rome, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020. AP

Italy surpasses UK for worst COVID death toll in Europe

ROME (AP)—Italy on Sunday eclipsed Britain to become the nation with the worst official coronavirus death toll in Europe.

Italy, where the continent's pandemic began, registered 484 COVID-19 deaths in one day, one of its lowest one-day death counts in about a month.

Still, those latest deaths pushed Italy's official toll up to 64,520, while Britain's stood at 64,267, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Both numbers understate the true toll of the pandemic. Counting criteria differ in the two countries, and many coronavirus deaths, especially early in the pandemic, are believed to have gone undetected, including those of elderly people in nursing homes who were not tested for COVID-19.

Among the reasons cited for Italy's high death toll was it that was the first country in Europe to be slammed in the pandemic, leaving health workers to grapple with a largely unknown virus. Italy also has a lower ratio of medical staff to patients compared to other European nations.

Germany, a nation much bigger than Italy, has a death toll one-third of Italy's or Britain's.

A little more than half of Italy's known COVID-19 deaths were registered in the first surge.

On Sunday, Italy reported another 17,938 coronavirus infections to raise its official tally to 1.84 million.

By far, the region registering the highest number of new infections was the northern region of Veneto. Italy's Lombardy region has the highest number of cases and deaths overall.

Largely heeding the advice of medical experts, Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte has tightened travel rules for the period straddling Christmas, New Year's and Epiphany Day holidays. Starting on Dec. 21 and running through Jan. 6, people in Italy won't be able to travel between regions except for work or urgent reasons such as health problems.

On the holidays themselves, under the nationwide restrictions, Italians can't leave their towns, as the government seeks to discourage families and friends from gathering in large numbers indoors.

Germany tightens virus lockdown over holidays

BERLIN (AP)—Most stores shut, tight limits on social contacts, no singing in church and a ban on fireworks sales: Germany is ratcheting up its pandemic restrictions in an effort to cut the stubbornly high rate of coronavirus infections.

Chancellor Angela Merkel said she and the governors of Germany's 16 states agreed Sunday to step up the country's lockdown measures beginning Wednesday to Jan. 10 to stop the country's exponential rise of COVID-19 cases.

"We are forced to act and we're acting," Merkel told reporters in Berlin, noting that existing restrictions imposed in November had failed to significantly reduce the number of new infections.

The seven-day rolling average of daily new cases in Germany has risen over the past two weeks from 21.23 new cases per 100,000 people on Nov. 28 to 26 new cases per 100,000 people on Dec. 12.

Starting Wednesday, schools nationwide will be closed or switch to home schooling; most non-food stores will be shuttered, as will businesses such as hairdressers that have so far been allowed to remain open. Restaurant takeout will still be permitted, but no eating or drinking can take place on site.

With the exception of Christmas, the number of people allowed to meet indoors will remain restricted to five, not including children under 14.

The sale of fireworks traditionally used to celebrate New Year's will also be banned, as will public outdoor gatherings on New Year's Eve.

Bavaria's governor, Markus Soeder, said the ban on fireworks followed appeals from hospitals, which said they wouldn't be able to treat the large number of serious injuries that result every years from mishandled explosives.

"We need to be careful that Germany doesn't become the problem child of Europe," he said.

Germany has set new records in the number of confirmed cases and deaths in recent weeks. Overall it has had about 22,000 virus deaths, a toll that is one-third that of Italy and Britain.

Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said the government would provide further financial support for businesses affected by the lockdown. German news agency dpa reported that the additional sums amounted to 11.2 billion euros ($13.6 billion).

Employers will be asked to let staff work from home, where possible, for the next month.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW:

The ultimate in sensible eco-friendly luxury: 2021 Ford F-150 Hybrid pickup

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

DALLAS—How hungry are you?

It might be an apt question given that the redesigned 2021 Ford F-150 has an onboard generator that can power 28 refrigerators. Not starving? Perhaps you need to keep your family and friends happy instead. The 2021 Ford F-150 can facilitate the ultimate tailgate party with enough juice to run a grill, a smoker, a flatscreen TV and speakers all at once. No wonder Ford's full-size pickup accounted for nearly 1% of all new vehicles sold in the U.S. last year. And it's no surprise that Ford treated it to a heavy refresh for the new model year.

Offered once again in XL, XLT, Lariat, King Ranch, Platinum and Limited trim, the F-150 retains its groundbreaking use of a fully boxed high-strength steel frame with a military-grade, aluminum alloy body. All F-150s get revised LED lighting and a power tailgate, which includes tailgate step and tailgate work surface with integral tablet holder, clamp pockets, integral imperial/metric measurements and tiedown points that double as bottle openers. Helpfully, a new zone lighting feature allows you to customize lighting on the exterior of the truck while parked, so you can turn on the lights on one side only, for example.

But the real changes are inside, where an interior makeover features a 12-inch infotainment touchscreen (8-inch on XLs) with a user interface that's ridiculously intuitive to use. It's the perfect companion to the 12-inch digital instrument cluster with big, bold graphics displayed in a clear hierarchy, making them easy to read. They are not overdesigned, and include a complete set of gauges, unusual in any vehicle these days. Other thoughtful upgrades include a wireless charging pad on the top three trim levels, and a premium Bang & Olufsen sound system.

If your truck is your office, Ford has included a 400-watt outlet for running office equipment, and a center armrest that converts to a flat work surface, with a storage bin beneath it large enough to hang file folders. It also boasts a business card holder and cupholders. And if it's been a rough day at the job site, the front seats fold flat to create a bed that's perfect for the quick nap. In the rear, there's optional lockable storage beneath the rear seats, a perfect place to store fishing rods or hunting rifles.

2021 Ford F-160. TNS

Like last year, the base F-150 powerplant is a 3.3-liter V-6 with 290 horsepower and 265 foot-pounds of torque, but buyers can step up to a 2.7-liter EcoBoost V-6 producing 325 horsepower and 400 foot-pounds of torque, a 5.0-liter V-8 rated at 395 horsepower and 400 foot-pounds of torque, a twin-turbocharged 3.5-liter EcoBoost V-6, rated at 375 horsepower and 470 foot-pounds of torque, and a Power Stroke 3.0-liter turbocharged V-6 diesel engine rated at 250 horsepower and 440 pound-feet of torque.

Both rear-wheel- and all-wheel drive models are offered. A 10-speed automatic transmission is standard.

But something new has been added for 2021: a 3.5-liter PowerBoost Full Hybrid V6; a twin-turbocharged and intercooled 3.5-liter overhead-cam V6 mated to an electric motor that generates 430 horsepower and 570 pound-feet of torque and returns an EPA-rated of 24 mpg. While one mpg less than the diesel, the hybrid outclasses it on towing, with a rating of 12,700 pounds. The hybrid is on all trim levels, and offers the most powerful version of the integrated generator, with 7.2 kilowatts of power, enough to help power key appliances when the power goes out.

Driving a King Ranch SuperCab all-wheel drive proves to be a potent combination with the hybrid's 570 pound-feet of torque providing the required punch for hauling a camper or joyriding on your favorite country road, particularly in the Sport driving mode, which uses the all-wheel-drive system for improved performance. Power always seems to be there when you need it, although the transmission does hesitate slightly before downshifting for more power. In contrast, the Eco mode slows things down somewhat, but returns better fuel economy than a compact SUV I was testing the same week. In fact, it's not unusual to be puttering around town solely on electricity, with the tachometer reading 0 rpm.

A quick comparison drive in a Limited with the 3.5-liter EcoBoost V6 proved almost as quick, but not nearly as fuel efficient at 18 mpg – good for a conventional gas-powered pickup, but less than the Hybrid's 22.6 mpg.

Regardless of which driveline you choose, you'll find the cabin is extraordinarily quiet, surprisingly so for a truck. Ride is comfortably compliant and luxurious, understandable given this truck's mission, although there is some up and down bobbing after you hit a bump or an undulation in the road. There's also the expected body lean, although it's not excessive. The steering is nicely weighted, but not a whole lot of road feel. Braking is very good, as nosedive is well-controlled. It's a very luxurious driving experience—so much so, you'd be excused for buying this over a luxury car. In upper trim levels, the F-150 is fairly opulent, with diamond quilted front seats like the finest luxury cars, as well as massage, heating and ventilation.

It's easy to understand why people prefer the Ford F-150. Built body on frame, like cars used to be, they are rugged, durable and last a very long time. Their quiet, comfortable ride, opulent interiors and first class technology deliver an incredible luxury experience, albeit one that allows you to tow your favorite plaything or haul a load of mulch.

Try that with a Bentley.

NUTS & BOLTS

2021 FORD F-150 KING RANCH SUPERCREW HYBRID

- **Base price**: $59,755
- **Engine**: Twin-turbocharged and intercooled OHC 3.5-liter Hybrid V6
- **Horsepower/Torque**: 430/570
- **EPA fuel economy (city/highway)**: 24/24 mpg
- **Observed fuel economy**: 22.6 mpg
- **Fuel required**: 87 Octane
- **Length/Width/Height**: 231.7/79.9/77.2 inches
- **Ground clearance**: 9.4 inches
- **Payload**: 1,830 pounds (4x4); 2,090 pounds (4x2)
- **Cargo capacity**: 52.8 cubic feet
- **Towing capacity**: 12,700 pounds

Spark plug problem

Q: In a recent column you responded to R.W. from Minnetonka, Minn., that he should not need spark plug replacement of the platinum tipped plugs until the manufacturer recommended 60,000 miles. One thing that is often not considered is that over time, the dissimilar metals in the aluminum heads and the spark plug materials make removal of the plugs difficult and potentially costly. Manufacturers tell vehicle owners that items have a longer service life than they actually do.

—J. K., Deerfield, Ill.

A: Although they are dissimilar metals, the steel spark plug shells seldom seize with the aluminum cylinder heads. Mechanics used to apply anti-seize compound to the spark plug threads (some still do), but most plugs are treated and no longer require the stuff. One notorious problem, however, was the Ford Navistar engine whose spark plugs extended extra far into the combustion chambers. A buildup of carbon made them nearly impossible to remove without damage. That is a case where the problem was avoided by replacing the plugs more often.

Q: I enjoy your column and now need to ask if something my husband does is creating a repeating problem. He had a Dodge Durango 2003-10. He ended up selling it because the heat stopped working. He purchased a new Chevy Tahoe from 2010-18 (over 250,000 miles). He ended up selling it because the heating and cooling stopped working. He purchased a used Chevy Colorado with 30,000 miles two years ago. Now the heating is intermittent at best. Now he is considering selling it because of this problem. The common denominator seems to be he keeps his defrost on. Would this have anything to do with his last three trucks all having the same issues?

—B.D., Chicago

A: Even if defrost is chosen heat should be adequate. Although the air conditioner runs whenever defrost is selected, it would be quite unusual for the heat to fail just because of that. The A/C draws moisture from the air thus keeping the windshield clear. Perhaps the blend door, that mixes the hot air with the cold air, may be malfunctioning. But the chances of this happening three times in a row are questionable.

Q: I have a 2010 Mitsubishi Galant SE with 120,000 miles. Recently the "service engine soon" light has come on. My guy ran a diagnostic and came up with my needing to replace the evap vent solenoid Mitsubishi part #8657A008. Problem is Mitsubishi no longer makes this part. Googling for the part name brings up a totally different part number that does not fit my car. The local Mitsubishi dealer tells me there are none of the correct part available anywhere and there is no alternative or work around – but I should feel free to come in and trade for a new car. There are tons of these units still on the road!

—P.T., Forest Lake, Ill.

A: Auto dealers are generally required to have parts available for only seven years. Of course, some may have the part, but tracking it down is a hassle. When the original part becomes unavailable, I turn to the aftermarket parts companies. One such company, Dorman, sells the purge valve you need. Check with your local auto parts store. We called an Advance Auto store and they showed over 200 available upon special order.

MOTORMOUTH

By BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

Life & Style

John le Carre, who probed murky world of spies, dies at 89

LONDON (AP)—John le Carre, the spy-turned-novelist whose elegant and intricate narratives defined the Cold War espionage thriller and brought acclaim to a genre critics had once ignored, has died. He was 89.

Le Carre's literary agency, Curtis Brown, said Sunday he died in Cornwall, southwest England on Saturday after a short illness. The agency said his death was not related to COVID-19. His family said he died of pneumonia

In classics such as "The Spy Who Came in from the Cold," "Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy" and "The Honourable Schoolboy," Le Carre combined terse but lyrical prose with the kind of complexity expected in literary fiction. His books grappled with betrayal, moral compromise and the psychological toll of a secret life. In the quiet, watchful spymaster George Smiley, he created one of 20th-century fiction's iconic characters—a decent man at the heart of a web of deceit.

"John le Carre has passed at the age of 89. This terrible year has claimed a literary giant and a humanitarian spirit," tweeted novelist Stephen King. Margaret Atwood said: "Very sorry to hear this. His Smiley novels are key to understanding the mid-20th century."

For le Carre, the world of espionage was a "metaphor for the human condition."

"I'm not part of the literary bureaucracy if you like that categorizes everybody: Romantic, Thriller, Serious," le Carre told The Associated Press in 2008. "I just go with what I want to write about and the characters. I don't announce this to myself as a thriller or an entertainment.

"I think all that is pretty silly stuff. It's easier for booksellers and critics, but I don't buy that categorization. I mean, what's 'A Tale of Two Cities?'—a thriller?"

His other works included "Smiley's People," "The Russia House," and, in 2017, the Smiley farewell, "A Legacy of Spies." Many novels were adapted for film and television, notably the 1965 productions of "Smiley's People' and "Tinker Tailor" featuring Alec Guinness as Smiley.

Le Carre was drawn to espionage by an upbringing that was superficially conventional but secretly tumultuous.

Born David John Moore Cornwell in Poole, southwest England on Oct. 19, 1931, he appeared to have a standard upper-middle-class education: the private Sherborne School, a year studying German literature at the University of Bern, compulsory military service in Austria—where he interrogated Eastern Bloc defectors—and a degree in modern languages at Oxford University. But his ostensibly ordinary upbringing was an illusion. His father, Ronnie Cornwell, was a con man who was an associate of gangsters and spent time in jail for insurance fraud. His mother left the family when David was 5; he didn't meet her again until he was 21.

It was a childhood of uncertainty and extremes: one minute limousines and champagne, the next eviction from the family's latest accommodation. It bred insecurity, an acute awareness of the gap between surface and reality—and a familiarity with secrecy that would serve him well in his future profession.

"These were very early experiences, actually, of clandestine survival," le Carre said in 1996. "The whole world was enemy territory."

After university, which was interrupted by his father's bankruptcy, he taught at the prestigious boarding school Eton before joining the foreign service.

Officially a diplomat, he was in fact a "lowly" operative with the domestic intelligence service MI5 —he'd started as a student at Oxford—and then its overseas counterpart MI6, serving in Germany, on the Cold War front line, under the cover of second secretary at the British Embassy.

Le Carre

His first three novels were written while he was a spy, and his employers required him to publish under a pseudonym. He remained "le Carre" for his entire career. He said he chose the name—square in French—simply because he liked the vaguely mysterious, European sound of it.

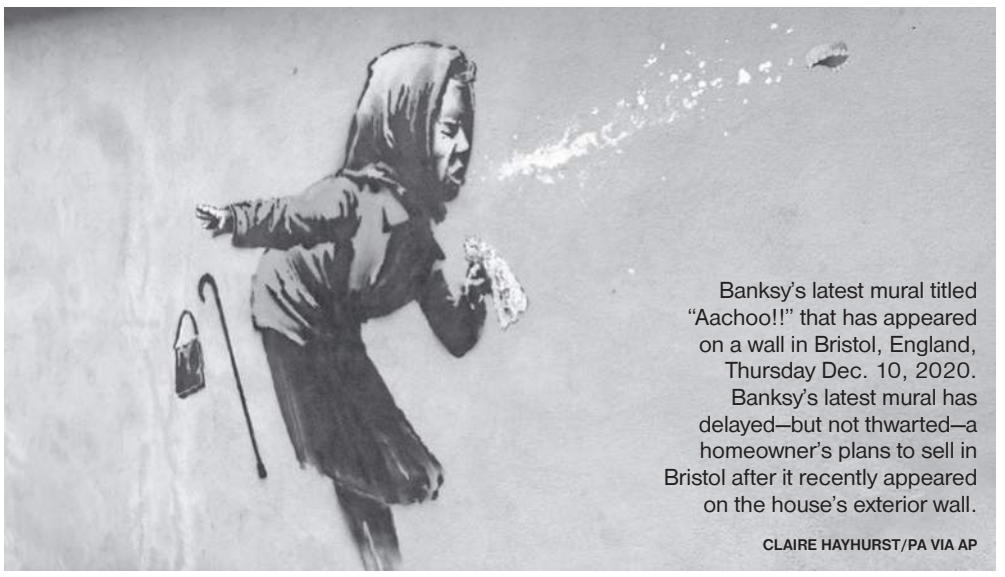
"Call For the Dead" appeared in 1961 and "A Murder of Quality" in 1962. Then in 1963 came "The Spy Who Came in From the Cold," a tale of an agent forced to carry out one last, risky operation in divided Berlin. It raised one of the author's recurring themes: the blurring of moral lines that is part and parcel of espionage, and the difficulty of distinguishing good guys from bad. Le Carre said it was written at one of the darkest points of the Cold War, just after the building of the Berlin Wall, at a time when he and his colleagues feared nuclear war might be imminent.

"So I wrote a book in great heat which said 'a plague on both your houses,'" le Carre told the BBC in 2000.

It was immediately hailed as a classic and allowed him to quit the intelligence service to become a full-time writer.

His depictions of life in the clubby, grubby, ethically tarnished world of "The Circus"—the books' code-name for MI6—were the antithesis of Ian Fleming's suave action-hero James Bond, and won le Carre a critical respect that eluded Fleming.

Smiley appeared in le Carre's first two novels and in the trilogy of "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy," "The Honorable Schoolboy," and "Smiley's People."



Banksy's latest mural titled "Aachoo!!" that has appeared on a wall in Bristol, England, Thursday Dec. 10, 2020. Banksy's latest mural has delayed—but not thwarted—a homeowner's plans to sell in Bristol after it recently appeared on the house's exterior wall.

CLAIRE HAYHURST/PA VIA AP

UK homeowner delays sale of home after Banksy mural appears

LONDON (AP)—Banksy's latest mural has delayed a homeowner's plans to sell in England after it recently appeared on the house's exterior wall.

The elusive British street artist's piece—titled "Aachoo!!"—depicts an elderly woman sneezing, sending her dentures flying out of her mouth. It's painted on the side of the house on a steep street in the southwestern city of Bristol. The resulting effect is that her sneeze appears to be knocking down buildings.

The creation was discovered on the wall of the semi-detached house on Thursday. British media reported that the owners, who had previously put a "sold" sign outside, were pulling out of the sale, because Banksy's art could send the property's value soaring.

However, Nick Makin told the BBC on Saturday that it wasn't true his mother, Aileen Makin, had taken the house off the market.

"It does increase the value, and you have to take a moment to think about it, but it's not changing anything in terms of the house sale for us," Makin said.

He said the sale has been put on hold for 48 hours and the family was trying to ensure the artwork would be protected.

Banksy has posted the piece on his website and Instagram page and his publicist confirmed he created the artwork. He began his career spray-painting buildings in Bristol and has become one of the world's best-known artists. Some of his art sells in the millions.

Man says machismo made him give in to divorce demand

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I was married to my wife for 29 years, and I have now been divorced for two. I have tried to move on, but I can't because I still love her. She initiated the divorce because she thought I cheated on her. I didn't fight her because I was too macho.

I don't know if I miss her or feel sorry for myself because I haven't been with a woman in more than two years. I'm attracted to women who are at least 15 years younger than me or who are married.

I have been on two dating sites for almost a year and even moved back to the state where my ex-wife lives hoping that one day she will ask me out. I've been throwing hints her way and have even written her letters, but she still thinks I cheated. I ache for her. What should I do?

FIGHTING CHANCE IN THE EAST

DEAR FIGHTING CHANCE: Your marriage is history, and your "exaggerated masculinity" caused it. I am struck by the fact that nowhere in your letter did you deny that what your ex-wife thought was true. I don't understand what being "macho" has to do with not denying you cheated. What you should do now is learn from it, grow from it and move on.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and his father had a falling out. My husband's father now has hired a lawyer to get the pictures and Vietnam medals back that he had given my husband as a gift years ago. This is his only son.

We have two sons whom my husband would like to pass the medals down to. He knows if he gives the medals back that he may never see them again because his dad has a girlfriend now who wants them. She's behind him pursuing the issue with a lawyer.

How can I help my husband? Should he give in to his father's demands and return the medals and pictures, or should he fight to keep them?

MIDDLE OF A MESS

DEAR MIDDLE: How old are your sons? Because of this rift, do they still have a relationship with their grandfather? Would they appreciate the war medals and understand what they stand for?

My feeling is that you should stay out of the line of fire and allow your husband and his own lawyer to fight this battle. However, you MAY be able to sway the outcome if you or your sons write your father-in-law a warm letter telling him how sad you feel about the situation and that his medals are heirlooms they and THEIR children would treasure in the future. Then cross your fingers.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: At what age does a person stop calling an older neighbor "Mrs." or "Mr."? I was born next door and still live here, so I don't know what to call my neighbors anymore.

GROWN UP NORTH

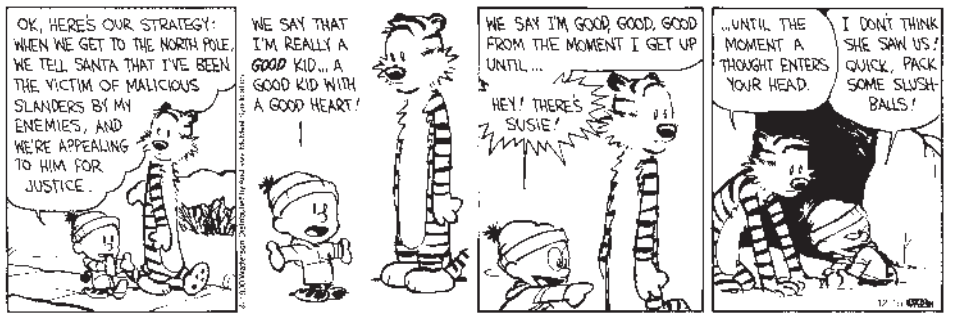
DEAR GROWN: Before children reach adulthood, it is considered respectful to call adults "Mr." and "Mrs." Not knowing your neighbors, I can't guess how formal they may be. Because using their first names has not been your practice and you don't want to risk offending them, ask THEM what they would like to be called in light of the fact that you are all adults. Erring on the side of respect will never be wrong.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

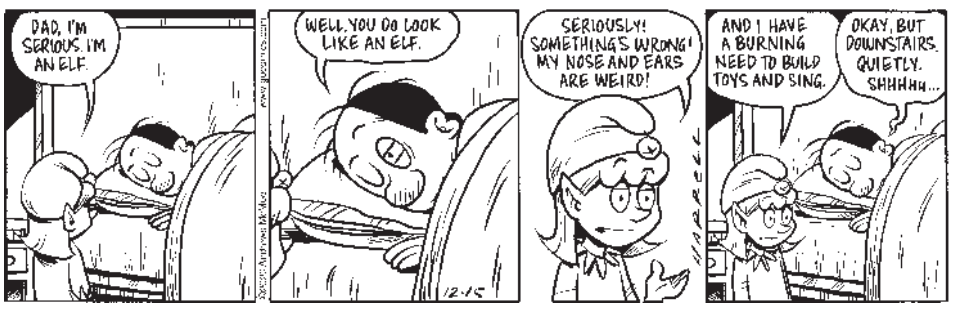

OK, HERE'S OUR STRATEGY: WHEN WE GET TO THE NORTH POLE, WE TELL SANTA THAT I'VE BEEN THE VICTIM OF MALICIOUS SLANDERS BY MY ENEMIES, AND WE'RE APPEALING TO HIM FOR JUSTICE.
WE SAY THAT I'M REALLY A GOOD KID... A GOOD KID WITH A GOOD HEART!
WE SAY I'M GOOD, GOOD, GOOD FROM THE MOMENT I GET UP UNTIL...
HEY! THERE'S SUSIE!
...UNTIL THE MOMENT A THOUGHT ENTERS YOUR HEAD.
I DON'T THINK SHE SAW US! QUICK, PACK SOME SLUSHBALLS!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DAD, I'M SERIOUS. I'M AN ELF.
WELL, YOU DO LOOK LIKE AN ELF.
SERIOUSLY! SOMETHING'S WRONG! MY NOSE AND EARS ARE WEIRD!
AND I HAVE A BURNING NEED TO BUILD TOYS AND SING.
OKAY, BUT DOWNSTAIRS. QUIETLY. SHHHHH...

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

DO YOU WANT TO SPLIT A DESSERT?
OKAY, BUT SEPARATE FORKS.
I THINK IT'S MORE ROMANTIC WHEN COUPLES SHARE THE SAME UTENSIL.
OKAY. AFTER I EAT MY HALF, I'LL HAND YOU THE FORK AND GO WAIT OUT IN THE CAR.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Improvise
5 Helium, for one
8 Green gem
12 Verbal
13 Mom's bro
14 Hurler Hershiser
15 Terrier type
17 Corridor
18 Physician's nickname
19 Of service
21 Move slightly
24 Black, in verse
25 Curved molding
26 Suave
30 Flamenco cheer
31 Temptress
32 Baton Rouge sch.
33 "The Jungle" author
35 Marathon fraction
36 Apple variety
37 Author Joyce Carol —
38 Search for food
41 "It's c-c-cold!"
42 Oklahoma city
43 RCA technician's expertise, say
48 Earth sci.
49 Clean air org.
50 King of the jungle
51 Head, to Henri
52 Trio after Q
53 Flightless birds

DOWN

1 "I do," for one
2 "Exodus" hero
3 Blemish
4 Take an oath
5 Avocado dip, for short
6 Blackbird
7 Cleaning brush
8 The "J" of J.S. Bach
9 United — Emirates
10 Farmer's place
11 "Legally Blonde" role
16 Weed whacker
20 Any time now
21 Greets the villain
22 Wrinkly fruit
23 TV chef Paula
24 Haunting
26 Circle width
27 Landed
28 Capri, for one
29 Regrets
31 Trudge
34 Baby rocker
35 Christie sleuth Jane
37 Mined-over matter
38 Shoe fillers
39 Formerly
40 Laugh-a-minute
41 Unruly kid
44 #2 execs
45 Goal
46 Chit
47 ICU workers

Solution time: 22 mins.

L	A	P		C	S	A	G	E		V	A	L
	N	A		A	I	O	Y			F	C	O
V	E	R	I	T	A	B	L	E		R	A	T
			D	E	N		A	L	I	B	I	S
C	A	V	O	R	T		N	I	N	A		
O	R	F		S	E	T		D	O	I	F	S
¯	E	R	R		D	I	M		N	I	G	H
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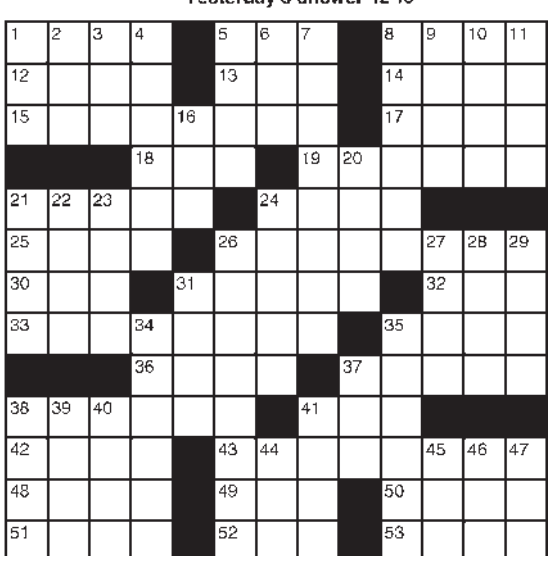
		I	S	L	A		N	I	C	E	S	I
B	E	L	A	I	R		A	D	A			
A	L	I		V	E	R	T	E	B	R	A	E
R	I	O		E	S	T	E	R		I	N	N
D	A	N		R	O	S	E	S		B	C	D

Yesterday's answer 12-15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Daniel Ezra, 29; Adam Brody, 41; Julie Taymor, 68; Don Johnson, 71.

Happy Birthday: A steady pace forward will get you where you want to go. Put your energy where it will bring the highest returns. An aggressive, no-nonsense approach to the way you do things will help you reach your goal. Don't let uncertainty deter you from reaching your full potential. Trust and believe in yourself, and reach for the stars. Your numbers are 4, 16, 21, 29, 36, 40, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Put emotional differences aside, and aim to get things done. Your energy is best spent concentrating on what's at stake and taking physical action. Working alongside someone you love will bring you closer to one another. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Set the pace, and put the changes you want to make in motion. Run the show, and you will reach your goal. Refuse to let red-tape issues get to you. An emotional revelation will encourage personal growth. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't trust hearsay. When in doubt, go directly to the source and find out where you stand. Romance is on the rise, but it's best to have a plan in mind before you venture down that path. Don't make empty promises. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Channel emotional energy into romance, not arguments and accusations. You'll get much further if you are mindful of what others expect and you are willing to work with personal and professional partners. Let your intuition guide you. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Keep moving forward and don't look back. Give others freedom, and they will grant you the same in return. Don't let someone's uncertainty unnerve you. Channel your energy into whatever will get you closer to your goal. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Be sure to get approval before making domestic changes that will affect others. Being upfront and enthusiastic regarding your plans will encourage others to pitch in and help instead of interfering with your goals. Learn from experience. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Keep an open mind, but don't let anyone railroad you into something that makes you feel insecure. Channel your energy into something that matters to you. Do something you enjoy or spend time with someone who brings out the best in you. Don't fold under pressure. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Alter the way you live, and it will enhance your personal life. Don't feel you have to spend money; you don't have to make an impression. If intelligence and charm aren't enough, you may be hanging out with the wrong people. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* The grass may look greener on the other side of the fence, but that doesn't mean it's time to make a life-altering change. Take a closer look and consider if the picture you envision is valid. Take precautions and verify facts. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Embrace change, and put your plan in motion. Use your energy wisely, and you will accomplish what you set out to do. Don't waste time arguing with someone who will never see things your way. Take control, and do what suits you best. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Refuse to let an unexpected change throw you off guard. Make whatever adjustment is necessary to compensate, and keep moving forward. An energetic approach will lead to positive attention and support. You'll receive information that will give you a competitive edge. ✪✪✪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Take a practical path when dealing with matters that influence your earning potential. If you trust someone's word, you will have to make difficult decisions and changes. Go directly to the source, and you'll find out exactly how to proceed successfully. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are focused, enthusiastic and flexible. You are aggressive and reliable.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1		9		4			
			5	1	8		9	
2	8							
	9		7	5		3	2	
4	5		6	3		1		
						8	1	
3		1	8	4				
		2		9		5		

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	5	7	9	8	4	2	1	3
8	2	4	7	3	1	9	5	6
1	3	9	2	6	5	7	4	8
7	9	2	8	5	6	1	3	4
3	8	1	4	2	7	5	6	9
5	4	6	3	1	9	8	7	2
2	6	3	1	7	8	4	9	5
4	1	8	5	9	3	6	2	7
9	7	5	6	4	2	3	8	1

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

QUIDNUNCS **Solution: 6 letters**

B	O	I	N	T	E	R	F	E	R	E	K	W	A	G
R	R	B	T	A	L	K	E	R	E	Y	R	O	T	S
T	E	O	T	E	M	R	E	V	O	C	N	U	G	P
E	K	D	A	R	O	E	I	Ⓣ	I	M	D	A	O	Y
L	S	K	N	D	U	T	W	Ⓤ	P	D	U	O	C	I
L	A	D	N	A	C	S	H	Ⓑ	R	I	N	R	I	N
T	M	Y	S	E	L	A	I	Ⓝ	O	S	E	Y	R	G
A	N	R	T	Y	S	S	S	V	B	C	P	E	C	T
L	U	E	E	T	Y	L	P	T	E	L	P	I	U	E
E	D	N	R	R	A	P	E	R	S	O	N	A	L	L
R	T	E	C	T	R	H	R	L	R	S	K	S	A	L
A	I	W	E	P	T	I	C	T	B	E	E	E	T	E
H	E	S	S	R	E	H	T	A	L	B	V	R	E	R
S	T	D	P	U	B	L	I	S	H	E	A	R	P	S
K	I	B	I	T	Z	E	R	T	R	O	U	B	L	E

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Admit, Babble, Betray, Blather, Broadcast, Chatty, Circulate, Detective, Disclose, Gawker, Hear, Idea, Interfere, Kibitzer, Latest, Leak, Name, News, Nosey, Obtrusive, Personal, Press, Probe, Publish, Report, Reveal, Rumor, Scandal, Secrets, Seek, Share, Slander, Snoop, Spill, Spying, Stirrer, Story, Talker, Teller, Telltale, Trouble, Turn, Uncover, Unmask, Whisper, Yenta

Yesterday's Answer: Quantum

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 47 through 61** order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Durant looks like old self in Nets debut

NEW YORK (AP)—Kevin Durant still can score in bunches.

The four-time NBA scoring champion returned from a lengthy injury absence to score 15 points in his debut with the Brooklyn Nets on Sunday night.

Durant ruptured the Achilles tendon in his right leg during the 2019 NBA Finals. He left the Golden State Warriors after that season and joined the Nets, but he missed the entire 2019-20 season while recovering, delaying his chance to play with close friend Kyrie Irving.

Durant played just under 24 minutes as Brooklyn beat the Washington Wizards 119-114 on Sunday night in its preseason opener.

"It felt great to be back in the routine and be back on the floor and feel like a player again," Durant said. "It felt great. Everybody's texting and calling and asking me how I'm feeling. I can't wait until that's over with so I can get back in the swing of things and just feel like one of the guys again."

Durant looked confident as he donned No. 7 instead of the familiar No. 35 he had worn for Oklahoma City and Golden State. His first basket on Sunday was a driving two-handed dunk.

"It's one thing to come back," said Steve Nash, the Nets' new coach. "It's another thing to come back and look as explosive and mobile and skillful as he has after a long layoff. I'm incredibly proud of him."

Durant and Irving played the first nine minutes, 27 seconds of the game together. Durant scored 11 points on 3-for-3 shooting during that stretch while Irving scored 12 points on 5-for-6 shooting to help the Nets take a 30-18 lead.

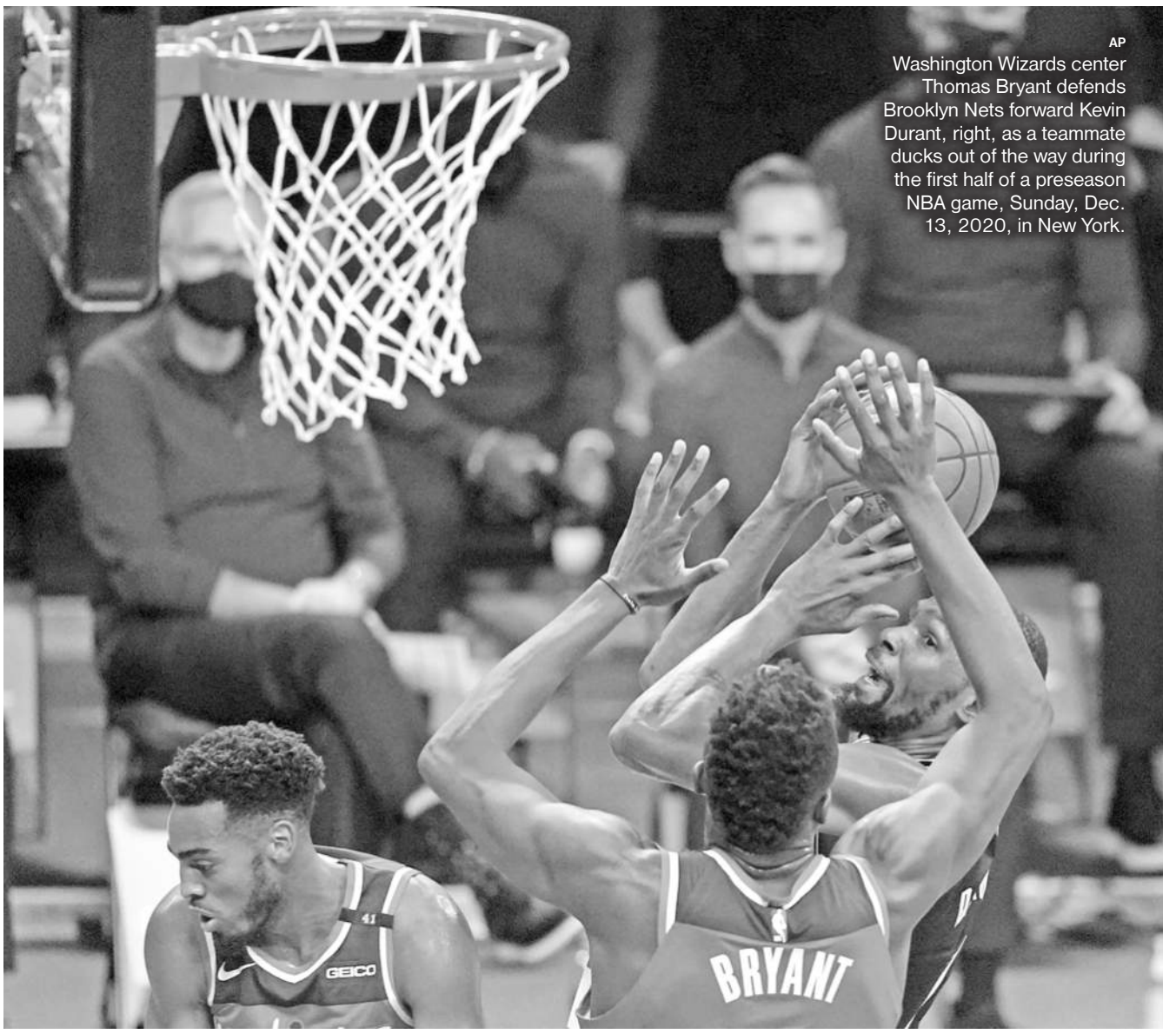
Late in the first half, Irving threw a long pass to Durant, whose reverse layup gave the Nets a 58-35 lead. Brooklyn's largest lead was 26 points in the second quarter.

Irving finished with 18 points in just over 17 minutes in his own return, having been limited to 20 games last season because of a shoulder injury.

"That's one of the perks of this position, is you get to coach two incredible players," Nash said. "Ky was super sharp and Kevin, after such an extensive layoff was very good and close to being incredible."

The Nets shot 63.9% in the first half to take a 68-50 lead at the break.

Durant played about six minutes in the second half and Irving didn't play at all. The Wizards took advantage and even took the lead briefly in the fourth quarter before Brooklyn regained control late.



AP
Washington Wizards center Thomas Bryant defends Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant, right, as a teammate ducks out of the way during the first half of a preseason NBA game, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020, in New York.

Durant said he felt good after the game, but he wouldn't say he was back to his old self.

"I can't tell after one preseason game," he said. "I felt good. I want to play at the highest level of basketball, the highest intensity of basketball, and it's not in the preseason. But it's a good first step."

Russell Westbrook did not play in what would have been his debut for the Wizards after being traded in a deal that sent John Wall to Houston. Bradley Beal also rested for Washington.

Rui Hachimura scored 18 points and Raul Neto added 17 for Washington. Deni Avdija, the ninth overall pick in the 2020 draft, scored 15 points for the Wizards.

Lakers 131, Clippers 106

In Los Angeles, the Lakers were back on the court on Sunday night against the Los Angeles Clippers in yet another exhibition game in the run-up to the December 22 matchup regular season against the same team. But in the second straight game, the talk of the night was Lakers second-year guard Talen Horton-Tucker. This time, it didn't even take the full game for Horton-Tucker to make an impression and getting reactions from the Lakers stars, LeBron James, and fellow Chicago native Anthony Davis.

Horton-Tucker's scoring binge included 31 points in three-quarters of action on Sunday against the Clippers. Because it's the preseason, Clippers stars Paul George and Kawhi Leonard each played just 18 minutes on Sunday while the Lakers rested James and Davis.

Horton-Tucker has been the talk of the preseason so far for the Lakers. He's been a fan favorite for a while, but his play in the preseason is backing up the hype now. He had a few moments in last year's postseason run to a championship, but he's in a prime position to have a major role in the title defense.

Hawks 116, Magic 107

At Atlanta, Trae Young scored 21 points and Bogdan Bogdanovic added 18 as the Hawks got their first preseason win.

Danilo Gallinari added 17 points and De'Andre Hunter added 15 for Atlanta, which made 17 3-pointers. Young and Bogdanovic each made four 3s.

Markelle Fultz scored 21 points and rookie Cole Anthony added 16 for the Magic. Aaron Gordon scored 15 points and Nikola Vucevic had 14 for Orlando.

The Magic defeated the Hawks 116-112 in Atlanta on Friday.

Kings 121, Trail Blazers 106,

The NBA preseason is supposed to be ugly. It's a series of exhibitions focused on getting some rudimentary playsets installed, as well as an extended look at a few young players.

That is exactly what the Kings' game against Portland Trail Blazers looked like Sunday night at the Moda Center. There were a few bright moments and a rough outline of what each team might look like when the season starts for real later this month, but the overall quality was less than stellar.

Sacramento continued to push the tempo and hoist 3-point shots at will. It wasn't pretty, but the Kings showed some resilience and came away with a win.

LiAngelo waived by Pistons

LiAngelo Ball, the middle brother of Lonzo and LaMelo, was reportedly waived on Sunday by the Detroit Pistons.

Ball signed a one-year, non-guaranteed contract with the Pistons on Dec. 2. The expectation was Ball would eventually be waived by the Pistons before the start of the regular season and funneled to their NBA G League affiliate, the Grand Rapids Drive.

The 22-year-old did not appear in either of the Pistons' two preseason games but was given some praise by head coach Dwane Casey recently, who called him an excellent player and a great person.

Nadal in, Federer doubtful for Australian Open

ZURICH—Roger Federer said his recovery from two surgeries on his left knee earlier this year has taken longer than expected and he is unsure whether he will be ready for the Australian Open.

World No.2 Rafael Nadal, on the other hand, has confirmed himself as a starter for next year's Grand Slam event.

The 2009 champion and 20-time grand slam winner will endure a 14-day quarantine in Melbourne and spearhead the delayed tournament, which is still expected to kick off three weeks later on Feb. 8.

Nadal's commitment to travel to Melbourne will come as a significant relief to tournament organisers, given the injury cloud over Federer and the general conjecture about the tournament due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Rafa is confirmed he is travelling to Melbourne and playing in the Australian Open," Nadal's manager Benito Pérez-Barbadillo said.

Nadal lost to eventual runner-up Dominic Thiem in the quarter finals of the 2020 Australian Open before going on to win the French Open, his 13th grand slam victory at Roland Garros.

Meanwhile, Federer, who turns 40 in August next year, has not played a competitive match since losing to Novak Djokovic in this season's semifinals at Melbourne Park.

The winner of 20 Grand Slam singles titles, a record he shares with Nadal, said in October he was practicing pain-free and expected to return to the circuit at the first Grand Slam of the year.

"I would have hoped that I would be 100% in October. But I am still not today. It will be tight for the Australian Open," local media quoted Federer as saying late on Sunday at an awards ceremony in Switzerland. The second knee operation was a huge damper, but in the last six months there has been steady progress. Let's see how the next two months will unfold. I've been doing a lot of physio and physical work lately, now let's see how tennis is doing."

The Australian Open is scheduled for Jan. 18-31 but there have been reports it could be pushed back to a Feb. 8-21 window due to COVID-19 protocols.

Even with a three-week delay it might not be enough for Federer, who has won the Australian Open six times.

"It's a race against time for the Australian Open. I'm curious to see whether it will start on Feb. 8," Federer said. "Of course, it would help if I had a bit more time."

Federer was voted the best Swiss athlete since 1950 at Sunday's ceremony and said it was an "incredible" honor.

"I hope there is still something to see from me next year," he added. "But if that was it, that would have been an incredible ending for me at these Sports Awards."

Despite a full week of Tennis Australia presenting its COVID safe plan to health authorities, there is yet to be an official announcement on next year's tournament. Sources close to the negotiations believe an official statement is "very close".

Tournament boss Craig Tiley wrote to players a fortnight ago, saying that the Open would almost certainly be staged from Feb. 8 with players allowed outside of their hotel quarantine for up to five hours a day to train and practice. ***(AP/NBC)***

Chiefs clinch AFC West; Packers top NFC North

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP)—Patrick Mahomes took a 30-yard sack before he got the Kansas City Chiefs going in the right direction.

The Chiefs overcame a 10-point deficit and four turnovers Sunday to clinch their fifth consecutive AFC West title by beating Miami 33-27.

Mahomes took the longest sack in the NFL in five years and was picked off three times, his first multi-interception game in more than two years. But he threw for 393 yards and two scores to help the Chiefs (12-1) earn their eighth consecutive victory.

It was the Chiefs' second consecutive comeback at Hard Rock Stadium, where they won the Super Bowl in February despite Mahomes' two interceptions.

"We won the Super Bowl here and just clinched the AFC West—it seems every time we leave this stadium we have a hat about something we accomplished," Mahomes said. "The (bad) part, it seems, is like I have half my interceptions at this stadium."

With Miami's loss, the Pittsburgh Steelers clinched a playoff spot.

Tyreek Hill ran through the Dolphins' secondary and behind it, scoring on a 32-yard run and a 44-yard reception when Mahomes hit him in stride at the goal line.

Travis Kelce had eight catches for 136 yards and a touchdown, Mecole Hardman scored untouched on a 67-yard punt return, and Kansas City's defense was stout against Tua Tagovailoa and the Dolphins' injury-riddled offense.

Chris Jones sacked the rookie for a safety for a 30-10 lead, and the Chiefs set a team record with their 10th road win in a row.

"Glad to get the win and get out of here," coach Andy Reid said. "That's a good football team."

Kansas City reached 12 wins for the third consecutive season, the longest streak in club history, and has the best 13-game record in franchise history, good for another division title.

"It's a great accomplishment, fifth time in a row," Chiefs chairman Clark Hunt said.

AP

Kansas City Chiefs defensive tackle Mike Pennel (64) and defensive end Tanoh Kpassagnon (92) tackle Miami Dolphins running back DeAndre Washington (31), during the second half of an NFL game, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Packers 31, Lions 24

Aaron Rodgers has played for the NFC championship four times without having his cleats in the turf at Lambeau Field once.

He hopes to change that fact next month.

Rodgers ran for a tiebreaking score in the third quarter and threw three touchdown passes, lifting the Green Bay Packers to a win over the the Detroit Lions to clinch the NFC North title.

The Packers (10-3) also moved into the top spot in the NFC. That gives them a shot to have home-field advantage on a potential path to the conference's only bye in the NFL's pandemic-altered postseason format—and maybe to the Super Bowl.

"To have the whole thing come through Green Bay is something we've talked about for a long time," Rodgers said. "That would definitely be in our favor with the weather that we have in Green Bay.

The New Orleans Saints lost to Philadelphia to fall back into a tie with Green Bay atop the NFC, and they would lose a potential tiebreaker because they lost to the Packers earlier this season. Green Bay repeated as division champion with its win and Minnesota's loss to Tampa Bay earlier in the day.

Bills 26, Steelers 15

Josh Allen threw two touchdown passes and safety Taron Johnson returned an interception 51 yards for a score in the win for Buffalo.

The Bills won for the sixth time in seven outings, and inched closer to claiming their first AFC East title since 1995 and third playoff berth in four seasons. Buffalo can clinch both as early as Monday night if Baltimore loses to Cleveland.

The AFC North-leading Steelers (11-2) have lost consecutive games in six days following a 23-17 loss to Washington, and dropped a game behind the AFC-leading Kansas City Chiefs (12-1).

Eagles 24, Saints 21

Jalen Hurts ran for 106 yards and threw for 167 and one touchdown, Miles Sanders had 115 yards rushing and a pair of scores. The Eagles (4-8-1) snapped a four-game losing streak and stayed within reach in the woeful NFC East.

The Saints (10-3) had won nine in a row and were 8-0 over the past two seasons without Drew Brees before running into the inspired Eagles. The loss dropped the Saints to the No. 2 seed in the NFC behind Green Bay, but they already have secured a playoff berth.

Washington 23, 49ers 15

Rookies Chase Young and Kamren Curl scored defensive touchdowns and Washington grabbed sole possession of first place in the NFC East.

Washington (6-7) has won four straight games and is one game ahead of the New York Giants. It is Washington's first four-game winning streak since 2016.

Washington can thank its young, impressive defense for this win. The team took a 13-7 lead at halftime after Young scooped up a fumble, shook off a tackle and ran 47 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown with 1:11 left in the second quarter. It was Young's first professional touchdown.

Colts 44, Raiders 27

T.Y. Hilton caught two touchdown passes from Philip Rivers and Jonathan Taylor rushed for a career-best 150 yards and two scores.

Rivers passed for 244 yards and Taylor had a key 62-yard TD run for the Colts (9-4), who racked up 456 total yards while scoring on seven of their first eight drives in their fourth victory in five games.

Safety Khari Willis clinched the win with a 53-yard interception return for his first career touchdown with 5:22 to play. Indianapolis stayed securely in one of the conference's wild-card spots and remained atop the AFC South alongside Tennessee.

Seahawks 40, Jets 3

Russell Wilson threw four more touchdowns passes to give him a career-high with 36 for the season before finally resting in the fourth quarter.

Seattle (9-4) rebounded exactly as it hoped after last week's surprisingly poor offensive performance in its loss to the New York Giants, and stayed even with the Los Angeles Rams on top of the NFC West.

Wilson threw touchdowns to Freddie Swain and DK Metcalf in the first half, and added TD tosses to Will Dissly and David Moore in the third quarter. It was his fifth game this season with at least four TD passes.

Buccaneers 26, Vikings 14

Tom Brady threw for 196 yards and two touchdowns. Brady tossed TD passes of 48 yards to Scotty Miller and 2 yards to Rob Gronkowski to rebound from losing two straight home games entering Tampa Bay's bye. Ronald Jones had a 1-yard TD run and Ryan Succop kicked field goals of 18 and 48 yards.

The Bucs (8-5) lost three of four games to division title contenders leading into last week's bye. They entered Sunday holding the sixth playoff spot in the NFC, with the Vikings (6-7) nipping at their heels after winning five of six following a 1-5 start.

Cardinals 26, Giants 7

Haason Reddick had a franchise-record five sacks and three forced fumbles as the Cardinals spoiled the return of Giants quarterback Daniel Jones and moved back into an NFC playoff spot.

Kyler Murray added a touchdown pass as Arizona (7-6) snapped a three-game skid and ended a four-game winning streak that had moved the Giants (5-8) to the top of the NFC East.

Mike Nugent came off the practice squad and added his first four field goals in more than a year, and Kenyan Drake scored on a 1-yard dive as Arizona won for only the second time in six games.

Titans 31, Jaguars 10

Derrick Henry ran for 215 yards and two touchdowns, his best performance in five trips to his hometown area, and the Titans handed the Jaguars a 12th consecutive loss. It was Henry's fourth game with at least 200 yards and two scores, setting an NFL record he previously shared with Hall of Famers Jim Brown, Barry Sanders and LaDainian Tomlinson.

Henry also topped the century mark for the ninth consecutive road game, leaving him one shy of the NFL mark set by Sanders over the 1996 and 1997 seasons.

Cowboys 30, Bengals 7

Andy Dalton was good enough in his return to Cincinnati, tossing two touchdown passes. Cincinnati greatly contributed to the cause of its longtime quarterback, who was playing in Paul Brown Stadium for the first time since he was cast aside by the team before the season. The Bengals fumbled the ball away on their first three drives, one fumble returned for a touchdown, and leading to 17 first-half points by the Cowboys (4-9). That was all they needed.

Dalton was serviceable, going 16 for 23 for 185 yards, as the Cowboys stayed in contention in the weak NFC East.

Broncos 32, Panthers 27

Drew Lock threw for 280 yards and a career-high four touchdowns, and Diontae Spencer returned a punt 83 yards for his first career score.

Lock connected on touchdown throws of 49 and 37 yards to rookie KJ Hamler and also threw scoring strikes to Nick Vannett and Tim Patrick to help the Broncos snap a two-game slide. Hamler, the team's second-round draft pick, twice beat veteran cornerback Rasul Douglas for touchdowns.

Bears 36, Texans 7

Mitchell Trubisky threw three touchdown passes to outplay Deshaun Watson in their first meeting since they entered the NFL, and the Bears snapped a six-game losing streak.

David Montgomery ran for an 80-yard touchdown on Chicago's first play from scrimmage, helping the Bears stopped their worst skid since the 2002 team dropped eight in a row to match a franchise record.

Cleveland Indians changing name after 105 years

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Cleveland Indians are changing their name after 105 years.

Citing three people familiar with the decision, The New York Times reported Sunday night that the team is moving away from a name considered racist for decades. The Indians have been internally discussing a potential name change for months.

A team spokesman told The Associated Press the franchise has no immediate comment on the report.

The Times said the team could make a formal announcement later this week. It's not known when the name change will take effect or if the team has settled on a new moniker.

Cleveland's move away from Indians follows a similar decision earlier this year by the NFL's Washington Football Team, which was previously known as the Redskins.

For years, Native American groups and others have protested against Cleveland's use of Indians as its name as well as other imagery used by the American League charter franchise founded in 1901. Last year, the team removed the contentious Chief Wahoo logo from its caps and jerseys, but the smiling, cartoonish mascot has remained popular and merchandise is still sold bearing its image.

The Indians have dealt with a backlash from fans upset over Chief Wahoo's removal and the club is certain to hear more with the decision to change its name.

"Oh no! What is going on?" President Donald Trump tweeted. "This is not good news, even for 'Indians'. Cancel culture at work!"

In July, just hours after Washington's plans became known after being pressured by several sponsors, including FedEx which holds naming rights to the football's team's stadium, Cleveland owner Paul Dolan released a statement saying the team would review "the best path forward with our team name."

AP

The Cleveland Indians have dealt with a backlash from fans upset over Chief Wahoo's removal and the club is certain to hear more with the decision to change its name.

In the months since, the team has consulted players, front office members, coaching staff, community leaders, share holders and Native American groups.

A few days after Dolan's statement, Indians manager Terry Francona said it was time to "move forward" with the name change.

"I've been thinking about it and been thinking about it before we put out that statement," said Francona, who has been with the club since 2013. "I know in the past, when I've been asked about, whether it's our name or the Chief Wahoo, I think I would usually answer and say I know that we're never trying to be disrespectful.

"And I still feel that way. But I don't think that's a good enough answer today. I think it's time to move forward. It's a very difficult subject. It's also delicate."

Meanwhile, Trevor Bauer isn't your usual free agent. From being the reigning NL Cy Young Award winner to the way he uses social media, for better or worse, nothing is the norm when it comes to the 29-year-old.

Whether it's directly to him or to his agent, Rachel Luba, fan bases all around baseball are trying to sway Bauer to sign with their favorite team this offseason. Giants fans, apparently, have made a strong impression on the Southern California native.

Bauer listed the Giants on his YouTube page as one of the five best fan bases who have pitched him this offseason. He broke down the criteria into three categories: Consistency, creativity and overall volume. He also noted the Cincinnati Reds, who he played for last season, didn't make the lists because they easily would have been No. 1 and that wouldn't have made for a fun video.

RUN

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running to lose weight. He used to weigh 220 lbs and is now at 163 lbs.

"In 2016, I was in pretty bad shape and I knew I had to lose weight overall to improve my mental health. Running every day is basically my free antidepressant pills. To date (last Wednesday), I have logged in 3,889.5 miles since I started my running streak," Dela Cruz said.

His longest distance single run so far was 17 miles and he runs an average of 4.5 miles a day. He sometimes run twice or three times a day, depending on his work schedule and do strength conditioning training at the Latte Built Fitness and Nutrition Gym.

His dream race?

"I want to go to the Boston Marathon. My dream goal as a runner just manifested this year. A lot of people told me it's impossible. Well, I run recreationally for 3.5 years. I just started training competitively this fall. I already shattered run times I thought were impossible. Give me another year or two and I will make the cut. The Boston Marathon is the crown jewel for marathon runners," said Dela Cruz, a regular at Beach Road and the track oval at the Oleai Sports Complex.

With the Boston Marathon still a year or two away, Dela Cruz will keep his focus on the Run The Marianas for now and other races/virtual challenges he can get his hands on, including next week's Christmas Island Relay.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Edward Dela Cruz Jr. poses for a photo after completing the half marathon event in Saipan Marathon last year as Super Mario.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Edward Dela Cruz Jr. shows his finisher medal from the Guam's Run to 21 Challenge (300 miles).

"What keeps me motivated is stacking as many virtual races and running challenges to make my 460 miles as a solo runner by Valentine's Day. I track my nutrition now. I make sure I get enough calories (protein, carbs,) water, and sleep to not die the next day," the Navy Hill resident said.

"The other reason I stacked so many challenges is I'm a finisher medal collector now. I used to collect Pokémon, Yu-gi-oh, and other trading cards. I hung those up to pick up running shoes and collect finisher medals now. One day I hope to have my wall stacked with as much medals as Bishop Ryan Jimenez's."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Edward Dela Cruz Jr. crosses the finish line in the 2017 Guam Marathon.

NMBA

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version of the sport, making it more accessible to players, and uses an especially-designed shuttlecock (AirShuttle) and racket.

"I enjoyed having them (NMBA players and officials) come out and show us the new badminton set up. I like to play this game and look forward to learning more about it. I wish that we would have had more time to learn more about it and get a chance to really play," SIS student Jack Xue said.

With Shuttle Time a hit at SIS, Pangilinan is pleased that badminton has been drawing more interest from students.

"I was quite surprised, but excited and happy to see so many faces take part in the course. It was a bit challenging considering this was the first time we had a course this big, but with the help of my teammates and volunteers from a soccer group, it became easier to handle," Pangilinan said.

Meanwhile, NMBA president Merlie Tolentino said they will continue to coordinate with schools to conduct Shuttle Time and will do it safely by following protocols on the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan International School students do warm-up stretches during the Northern Marianas Badminton Association's Shuttle Time session at the Geckos turf in As Lito late last month.

Durant looks like old self in Nets debut

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Run, then run some more

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

If there's a list of CNMI runners with the most virtual races participated in at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, firefighter Edward Dela Cruz Jr. would be on top of it.

Dela Cruz joined four virtual races (competitive)—JP Heroes Run, NMA Turkey Trot Run, Run Guam 5 Mile, and Marathon Training Academy End the Year Virtual Half Marathon. As of last week, including the four competitive races and various challenges, his name was on 17 events.

The 28-year-old has completed all, but one of the Pacer Adventure Series: Mt. Fuji (24 miles); Mt. Kilimanjaro (31 miles); Mt. Everest Base Camp (44 miles); Great Ocean Walk (64 miles); (completed); and Great Pyramid of Egypt (82 miles). Dela Cruz's last stop in the series is the Great Wall of China (186 miles) "course."

He also entered The Conqueror Challenge Series and so far has completed the Mt. Fuji's 46-mile event and is on to the Hadrians Wall (90 miles). Dela Cruz added the Guam's Run to 21 Challenge (300 miles) to his completion list last weekend along with the Run the Marianas (460 miles team division) and Marathon Training Academy Corona Lisa 100 Miles Challenge.

Despite logging the required miles in the Run The Marianas' team event, Dela Cruz did not stop there, as he is going for the finish, too as a solo runner in the same challenge.

Actually, the former infantry officer at the U.S. Army hasn't hit the breaks since Jan. 12, 2017. Long before the virtual race fad came, Dela Cruz has been on the road.

"I run every single day. I started it since Jan. 12, 2017. To hold a running streak, you have to run at the minimum one mile nonstop every day. Walking cannot count. I didn't intend to run my first 365 days. It started as a 30-day challenge. Grew to 90. Next thing I knew it's already been 1,430 days (as of last Wednesday)," Dela Cruz said.

The former youth director of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa admitted getting into

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Edward Dela Cruz Jr. warms up at the Oleai Sports Complex track oval before hitting Beach Road for his regular run last Sunday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan International School students watch, as Northern Marianas Badminton Association's Cristy Villaflor, right, and SIS teacher Dick Guintu demonstrate how to hit the AirShuttle during NMBA's Shuttle Time session at the Geckos turf in As Lito late last month.

NMBA brings Shuttle Time to SIS

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Badminton Association conducted another session of Shuttle Time, introducing AirBadminton to Saipan International School students.

Around 50 SIS students participated in the clinic and learned the basics of the innovative version of badminton, as drills and matches were done at the Geckos' ground late last month. National players Janelle Pangilinan and Daniel Macario facilitated the one-hour clinic with the help of some volunteers.

"The students' reception of the badminton clinic was a good one. I wish that we would have had more time as we had a lot of kids that were interested but not enough time to get to them all," said SIS teacher April Liske-Clark.

"I plan on having smaller groups attend the training when we come back from our holiday break. Our P.E. classes already included badminton and will continue to do so. I am excited that SIS will be trying to put together a team to play after the holiday break, and we all are looking forward to learning more about it. I think that the new AirBadminton will be a lot of fun to play," she added.

NMBA started introducing AirBadminton on island last October, as it held a session for a small group of U15 players at the Olea Sports Complex Field. AirBadminton is the outdoor

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